

Monday 5th December 2022

Reading 1, Isaiah 35:1-10; Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 84:9-14; Gospel, Luke 5:17-26

As well as the freshness of the air, baubles, Christmas puddings and decorations in general, it is also the time to get to our roots, prepare our hearts and homes for the wonder and splendour of Christ's birth. During Advent we not only prepare externally but internally too, to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. In the run up to the four weeks of Advent we light up the candles of hope, love, joy and peace. At a time when the world is centred on materialistic accomplishments it is difficult to focus our Advent journey through forgiveness and healing as Luke suggests in this apt reading, but let's give it a go.

On reading this passage what stood out for me was "some men" came carrying a paralysed man and later we read clearly about "their faith" which made Jesus heal the paralytic. So, it's obvious to say that Advent is a golden chance for us to become "some men and women" so that "our faith" journey of forgiveness and penance can become the hook on which many others can cling and be encouraged to forgive and receive healing in the process.

This Advent let us make room not only for physical but for spiritual healing and nourishment too and perhaps avoid becoming like the Pharisees in our communities. In this day and age of online shopping and 5G network, Jesus is certainly not trying to sell physical healing as a magnet to attract people to himself but he is spending his energy on spiritually charging them by the power of forgiveness and healing. Our Advent journey should be a time to reflect on our sinfulness, wretchedness, pain, and suffering. So, let's prepare our hearts and minds to a good confession which will help us to spruce up our spent energy on the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With the candle of hope, love, joy and peace making inroads in our life through penance, he is sure to heal us both inwardly and outwardly. And, when we put our Advent apron on with a contrite heart, reflecting on it with steadfast faith, Jesus will work wonders through us. Then we can look at our relationships and friendships like a fresh Christmas tree glowing with all the trimmings and trappings of a blessed winter night. With confidence then, we can hook a smiley emoticon bauble which aptly says Merry Christmas!

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