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“Everything in this life passes away—only God remains, only He is worth struggling towards. We have a choice: to follow the way of this world, of the society that surrounds us, and thereby find ourselves outside of God; or to choose the way of life, to choose God Who calls us and for Whom our heart is searching.” — Fr. Seraphim Rose

The Healing of the Paralytic and the Loneliness of Contemporary Man

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The Healing of the Paralytic and the Loneliness of Contemporary Man





By Fr. George Calciu

What is more striking in today's Gospel (John 5:1-15), is the loneliness of the sick man.

Have you heard? *"Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me."* (Jn. 5: 7).

The most tragic state of man is loneliness, he's total isolation. According to Saint Cyprian of Carthage: *"Everyone falls alone, but we are been saved in the community"*, in the community of the church. To be alone means to fall, to get lost. Being along implies thinking only of oneself, (or perhaps not even so) because you're overwhelmed by the suffering in which you lie. You are overpowered by the futility of life. If your life is lonely and bereft of God, it becomes useless and lost -a life whose meaning has vanished from the moment you became isolated.

This paralytic did not even have a relative, or a friend to put him in *the pool when the water was troubled*, so that he could be healed.

How many times do we find ourselves in this situation? How many times do we feel alone or sick or disable, or bereft of anyone to help us to be healed or relieved from our suffering? Or perhaps, in our loneliness and pain we cannot find someone to share [our suffering], because as a German proverb says: a pain shared is halved, but an unrequited pain is doubled. So it happened with this (paralytic) man.

But our merciful Lord asked him: *"Wilt thou be made whole?"* (John 5:6). Such a question addressed to the sick, may seem unnecessary. Of course he wants to be healed.

However, our Savior's was alluding to something else. This man was sick for his sins, and when he was asked: *"Wilt thou be made whole?"* our Savior was in fact asking him: *"Do you want to repent of your sins?"* The proof of this is revealed to us later, when Jesus met him in the temple and said: *"Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come onto thee "* (Jn. 5:14).

What is even more striking to us and to others, is that the moment Jesus healed the paralytic man, those around him instead of rejoicing seeing him healed, the scribes and the Pharisees became angry and said: *"It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for you to carry thy bed."* (John 5:10) They did not say: *"We are grateful that you are healed! Go and give thanks to God"*. Rather, they were only interested in the formality of the law, which stated that on Saturdays, one should not work. They sacrificed man in order to obey this Law.

And they have asked him: *"Who is the Man that healed you?"* But he didn't know *"who it was"* (cf. John 5:12-13). But when Jesus met him in the temple, he went away and told the Jews that: *"It was Jesus Who had made him whole"* (see Jn 5:15).





He's intent was not to denounce Jesus to the Jews, rather his sincere will to say to anyone: *"This Man helped me! He healed me! He stood by me in misery! "*

We all feel the need to proclaim it when someone had helped us. We feel the need to reveal a miracle. Not for praise, but to escape the loneliness, the sickness and the pain! I feel the need to proclaim who brought me to the Faith, who absolved me from my sins and the wickedness of my heart: a priest, a believer, a friend ... I feel the need to say: *"He helped me!"* So it was with this paralytic.

My beloved faithful, our contemporary society and most authorities, not only the communists – are increasingly isolating us, in order that we may become lonelier, less bound to each other and less communicative, in order that they may lead us to their intended destination. They are trying to isolate us, because communities are much harder to lead than isolated individuals.

The communists have done it through violence. The West doesn't use violence but another method: proclaiming that you are "unique", that you have "many rights", you are an "independent man", that you need to be alone, not confined to your parents, not obedient to them or to anyone as a child, because you are a "free man".

This misunderstood freedom is a revolt against God, it is nihilism.

Thus, we have reached the state that we see today, with all the crimes that haunt the world...where 14 year-old children shoot their teachers, their friends, and their parents.

We broke the human ties with those we live near. That spiritual relationship between my brother and me, between my parents and me, between parents and children, between friends has vanished. And in this disintegration of the personality, which leads towards a demonized world, we are growing increasingly isolated.

Let us remain united in faith and love with one another, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let us stay united in the community of the Church, because the Church of Christ is the only beneficial social group. Other groups lead to self-destruction. They attempt to destroy humankind, to make man an instrument of business, a mere cog in this complicated mechanism of human society.

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