

Homily [EN/FR] by Fr Krystian Sowa sj
at the Ecumenical Celebration 20th Anniversary Chapel for Europe

Gospel : Luc 5, 17-26

One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick.

Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."

So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

Dear Friends,

I would like to start our reflexion with some inspirations from the Gospel we just have heard, and to finish with the letter, in French, we received from Cardinal Jozef de Kesel, just for tonight's celebration.

In the Gospel passage we have just heard, for many of readers, and also for myself, the real hero of the story is not the person healed, it is not even Jesus, there are rather the men who carry the mat, from Saint Matthew text we know they were four. We don't know much about them, where they came from, whether they knew each other before or not, whether they were friends or not, if they have a one leader or not, all this probably didn't really matter. What mattered was that they knew how to work together, that they were creative and that they had faith.

The story tells us that Jesus heals "seeing their faith". The story does not say that Jesus heals seeing "the faith just of the paralysed man". One could even imagine that the faith of the paralysed man was not the most important here, this man actually could believe or not believe, and it is the faith of the helpers that was essential.

This gospel story represents for me an ecumenical encounter. And if so, I find it the most beautiful image of the ecumenical "get together" I find in the Bible. It accompanies me all the time, from the beginning of my service in the Chapel, and with time I am more and more aware how this "get together" is important.

So, I would like to thank our ecumenical friends, friends of the Chapel, for all these moments of getting together. Here, in this Chapel and in other places. It is your Chapel. May we, despite our differences and different sensibilities, move forward together, united by faith and action, to bring people and different projects together towards Jesus Christ, as these men in the Gospel did. And then, as the Gospel assures us, "remarkable things" will happen.

Maintenant, je voudrais continuer avec la lettre du Cardinal Jozef de Kesel, message à l'occasion de l'Inauguration Œcuménique de la Chapelle pour l'Europe.

[la lettre du Cardinal lu]

La lettre parle d'elle-même, il n'est pas nécessaire de la commenter. A ce point, je voudrais seulement présenter trois vœux pour notre Chapelle pour les vingt prochaines années, bien exprimés d'ailleurs dans la lettre du Cardinal.

Que la Chapelle reste un vrai lieu de rencontre, multiculturel, œcuménique, interreligieux où chacun est bienvenu, un espace accueillant de rencontre avec Dieu, avec les autres et avec soi-même.

Ensuite, que cette Chapelle soit non seulement un lieu de prière, c'est évident, mais aussi un lieu de réflexion et de dialogue sur les sujets européens, spirituels et sociaux d'importance.

Finalement, que la Chapelle soit un projet commun de plusieurs partenaires, entourée par beaucoup d'amis qui s'impliquent. Et qu'on ait beaucoup de joie à avancer ensemble.