

The Delegation of the Power to Absolve Sins

TODAY'S GOSPEL shows us how, in a concrete case, our Lord established His claim to divine character and power by the performance of a miracle. Many miracles like those which our Lord performed were wrought at various times by holy servants of God, so that the miracles, in themselves, would not prove more than that Jesus was a very special instrument of divine power. But when He wrought visible and undeniable miracles as a proof of His claim to the possession of divine power, such miracles actually established the claim. No one but a friend of God could work miracles, and if a friend of God made a claim that was not true, he could not substantiate it by a miracle. Over and over again in His preaching our Lord appealed to the evidence of His works for the truth of His claims and His teaching (*cf.* Jn. 10:25-32, 38; 14:11; 15:24). Today's Gospel gives us the clearest of all the examples of such appeals to the evidential value of Christ's miracles. Jesus proves, then, that in Himself, as the Messiah, He possesses immediately the power of forgiving sin, and from the Gospels it is certain that He imparted that power to His representatives in the Church. To St. Peter, He promised the power of the Keys at Cæsarea Philippi (Mt. 16:19). To the whole Apostolic College, He later pro-



mised the power of binding and loosing (Mt. 18:18), and on the evening of Resurrection Day He actually conferred on the Apostles the power of remitting sin (Jn. 20:21ff).

This wondrous power of remitting sin—a power surpassing every earthly power—belongs to every Catholic priest, however simple and obscure he may be. That Catholic priests have this power is certain with all the certainty of faith, so that in the confessional the work of Jesus at Capharnaum is surely continued.

Apart from the gift of Himself in the Holy Eucharist, this gift of absolving power is the most gracious and beneficent of all the gifts that God has given to His Church. The peace and serenity which the absolution of the priest can give the troubled soul is surely one of the greatest of all the myriad comforts which Jesus has provided for His own.

The people at Capharnaum glorified God because He had given to one, Who seemed to them to be a mere man, power to work a miracle of bodily healing. How greatly, then, should we glorify God and thank Him for the power of absolving which He has given to Catholic priests! And if we rightly rejoice in this gracious gift of God to men, why do we not, at the same time, resolve to make use of that gift as frequently as we can?

Commentary by Msgr. Patrick Boylan (1879-1974).



Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee.

Proper Prayers of the Mass in the Extraordinary Form

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Introit (Ecclesiasticus 36:18)

DA PACEM, Dómine, sustinentibus te, ut prophætæ tui fideles inveniántur: exáudi preces servi tui, et plebis tuæ Israël. *Ps. 121:1.* Lætátus sum in his, quæ dicta sunt mihi: in domum Dómini íbimus. *V.* Glória Patri, et Filio, et Spirítui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in sæcula sæculórum. *R.* Amen. — Da pacem, Dómine ...

GIVE PEACE, O Lord, to them that patiently wait for Thee, that Thy prophets may be found faithful: hear the prayers of Thy servant, and of Thy people Israel. *Psalm.* I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord. *V.* Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. — Give peace ...

Collect

DÍRIGAT corda nostra, quæsumus, Dómine, tuæ miserationis operátio: quia tibi sine te placére non póssumus. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum, Fílium tuum ...

LET THE exercise of Thy compassion, we beseech Thee, O Lord, direct our hearts: for without Thee we are not able to please Thee. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee ...

Epistle (I Corinthians 1:4-8)

FRATRES: Grátias ago Deo, meo semper pro vobis in grátia Dei, quæ data est vobis in Christo Jesu: quod in ómnibus dívites facti estis in illo, in omni verbo et in omni sciéntia: sicut testimónium Christi confirmátum est in vobis: ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla grátia, expectántibus revelatiónem Dómini nostri Jesu Christi, qui et confirmábit vos usque in finem sine crimine, in die advéntus Dómini nostri Jesu Christi.

BRETHREN: I give thanks to my God always for you, for the grace of God that is given you in Jesus Christ, that in all things you are made rich in Him in all utterance and in all knowledge, as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that nothing is wanting to you in any grace, waiting for the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who also will confirm you unto the end without crime, in the day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gradual (Psalm 121:1,7)

I REJOICED at the things that were said to me: We shall go into the house of our Lord. Let peace be in thy strength, and abundance in Thy towers. **Alleluia, alleluia.** (*Ps. 101:16.*) The Gentiles shall fear Thy Name, O Lord: and all the kings of the earth Thy glory. Alleluia.

LÆTATUS SUM in his quæ dicta sunt mihi: in domum Dómini íbimus. V̄. Fiat pax in virtúte tua: et abundantia in túrribus tuis. Allelúia, allelúia. V̄. Timébunt gentes nomen tuum, Dómine: et omnes reges terræ glóriam tuam. Allelúia.

Gospel (Matthew 9:1–8)

AT THAT TIME Jesus, entering into a boat, passed over the water and came into His own city. And behold they brought Him one sick of the palsy lying in a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold some of the scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? whether is easier to say: Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say: Arise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then said He to the man sick of the palsy): Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it feared and glorified God who had given such power to men. — *Creed.*

IN ILLO TÉMPORE: Ascéndens Jesus in navículam, transfretávit, et venit in civitátem suam. Et ecce offerébant ei paralyticum jacéntem in lecto. Et videns Jesus fidem illorum, dixit paralytico: Confide, fili, remittúntur tibi peccáta tua. Et ecce quidam de scribis dixerunt intra se: Hic blasphemámat. Et cum vidisset Jesus cogitatíones eórum, dixit: Ut quid cogitátis mala in cordibus vestris? Quid est facilius, dicere: Dimittúntur tibi peccáta tua: an dicere: Surge, et ámbula? Ut autem sciátis, quia Fílius hóminis habet potestátem in terra dimitténdi peccáta, tunc ait paralytico: Surge, tolle lectum tuum, et vade in domum tuam. Et surrexit et ábiit in domum suam. Vidéntes autem turbæ timuerunt et glorificáverunt Deum, qui dedit potestátem talem homínibus. — *Credo.*

Offertory (Exodus 24:4,5)

MOSES consecrated an altar to the Lord, offering upon it holocausts, and sacrificing victims: he made an evening sacrifice to the Lord God for an odor of sweetness, in the sight of the children of Israel.

SANCTIFICÁVIT Móyses altáre Dómino, offerens super illud holocáusta, et ímmolans víctimas: fecit sacrificium vespertinum in odórem suavitátis Dómino Deo, in conspéctu filiórnm Israél.

Secret

O GOD, who, by Thy venerable intercourse with us in this Sacrifice dost make us partakers of the one Supreme Godhead: grant, we beseech Thee, that as we know Thy truth, so we may follow it by worthy lives. Through our Lord ...

DEUS, QUI NOS, per hujus sacrificii veneránda commércia, unius summæ divinitátis partícipes éfficis: præsta, quæsumus: ut, sicut tuam cognóscimus veritátem, sic eam dignis móribus assequámur. Per Dóminum ...

Preface of the Most Holy Trinity

IT IS TRULY meet and just, right and for our salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to Thee, holy Lord, Father almighty, eternal God: Who, together with Thine only-begotten Son and the Holy Ghost, art one God, one Lord: not in the Oneness of a single Person, but in the Trinity of one Substance. For what by Thy revelation we believe of Thy glory, the same do we believe of Thy Son, the same of the Holy Ghost, without difference or separation; so that in confessing the true and eternal Godhead, in It we should adore distinction in Persons, unity in Essence, and equality in Majesty: in praise of which Angels and Archangels, Cherubim also and Seraphim, day by day exclaim, without end and with one voice, saying: — *Sanctus.*

VERE DIGNUM et justum est, æquum et salutáre, nos tibi semper, et ubique grátias ágere: Dómine sancte, Pater omnipotens, ætérne Deus. Qui cum unigénito Fílio tuo, et Spírítu Sancto, unus es Deus, unus es Dóminus: non in unius singularitáte persónæ, sed in unius Trinitáte substántiæ. Quod enim de tua glória, revelánte te, crédimus, hoc de Fílio tuo, hoc de Spírítu Sancto, sine differentia discretiónis sentimus. Ut in confessióne veræ sempiternæque Deitátis, et in persónis proprietas, et in esséntia únitas, et in majestáte adorétur æqualitas. Quam laudant Ángeli, atque Archángeli, Chérubim quoque ac Séráphim: qui non cessant clamáre quotidie, una voce dicéntes: — *Sanctus.*

Communion (Psalm 95:8–9)

BRING UP sacrifices, and come into His courts: adore ye the Lord in His holy court.

TÓLLITE hóstias, et introíte in átria ejus: adoráte Dóminum in aula sancta ejus.

Postcommunion

WE HAVE been renewed, O Lord, by Thy sacred Gift, and thank Thee, beseeching Thee in Thy mercy to make us worthy partakers in It. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son ...

GRÁTIAS tibi referimus, Dómine, sacro múnere vegetáti: tuam misericórdiam deprecántes; ut dignos nos ejus participatióne perficias. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum Fílium tuum ...