SS Peter and Paul 2014

“Au nom de Jésus-Christ de Nazareth, marche!” (Acts 3:5)

In the first Nocturn of Matins this morning, we read of the miraculous healing of a man begging alms. Mystically, this poor fellow represents each one of us, and we can think of this in three ways.

In the first place, St. Luke tells us that “il y avait un homme, boiteux de naissance, qu'on apportait et posait chaque jour près de la porte du temple appelée la Belle, pour demander l'aumône à ceux qui entraient dans le temple” (Acts 3:1). Each one of us was conceived and born “boiteux”—in the sorry state of original sin. If we were fortunate enough to have been baptized as infants, then we, too, we carried by another, even “près de la porte du temple appelée la Belle,” l’Eglise catholique, notre Mère. A la porte du temple, our godparents begged in our name for the alms of baptism. Each one of us should recall this day with great joy and thanksgiving, for it is truly a gift beyond all giving, which no one can merit.

In the second place, St. Luke tells us that Saint-Pierre “lui dit: Je n’ai ni argent ni or; mais ce que j’ai, je te le donne : au nom de Jésus-Christ de Nazareth, marche!” (Acts 3:5) What was this gift that each one of us received on the day of our baptism, the day of our First Holy Communion, the day of our Confirmation? The gift was Jesus Christ Himself! Only Jesus Christ is able to raise us from the dead, to take us by the hand and lead us into everlasting life. We often forget this simple truth, and strive to heal ourselves by running after the silver and gold of the things of this world—but this is not what the Church offers us! The Church offers us the same gift she offered to that poor man sitting by the gate of the temple: to be able to walk, to live a truly human life, filled with the Spirit of God.

Finally, we read that Saint-Pierre, “le prenant par la main droite, il le souleva (Acts 3:6). Christ Himself has taken hold of us “par la main droite” at our baptism. But we must hold on to Him tightly! Indeed, as the Bride says mystically of the Bridegroom in the Canticle of Canticles, “I have taken hold, and will not let go!” (Cant. 3:4) [can u find the french?] We take hold of Christ par excellence in the Most Blessed Sacrament, cherishing Him in the temple of our hearts. Because of this great gift which we have all received, we must imitate the response of the man miraculously healed. St-Luke tells us that “il entra avec eux dans le temple, marchant, sautant et louant Dieu” (Acts 3:7). Ainsi soit-il!