

FEBRUARY 9, 2026 FATHER PETER JAE CHOI

Judge Frank Caprio was a celebrity judge, famous for reality TV shows. He was well known for kindness and compassion. About five years ago a Catholic Priest, Fr. Mark Mastin made a surprise appearance in his courtroom. He went there to make a \$1000 donation, as he grew up poor and working with the poor, he understood the daily struggles the poor have with their finances. He was hoping that his donation could help those who couldn't afford to pay their fines. He explained, the word mercy (Hesed in Hebrew) means to journey with someone, to give them a sense of hope and purpose in life.

In today's gospel, we heard people bringing their loved ones who were sick to Jesus. Unlike today where paramedics have stretchers that have wheels on them to transport the sick with ease, people brought their loved ones on mats by bearing their full weight on an uneven surface for hundreds of meters if not kilometers. Of course, Jesus saw the effort they put in, and how much they loved them. So Jesus cured all the sick that were brought to Him. In doing so, miracles didn't just manifest Jesus' power and authority, but what was in His heart: compassion, mercy and love.

These miracles Jesus performed are not some fairytale stories that people made up. They really happened. There were eyewitnesses. Miracles still happen to this day. In St. Joseph's oratory you will see countless numbers of crutches, canes and wheelchairs left behind by those who received miraculous healings. However, that being said, not everyone receives healing. There are those who get healed and there are those who don't. When we pray for healing and it doesn't happen, I am sure it's really disappointing and even heart breaking.

There is a very powerful scene from the Chosen Series. Jordan Walker Ross who plays James the Lesser, or “Little James” actually suffers from Cerebral Palsy and Scoliosis. In the chosen series James witnessed miraculous healings, and Jesus empowering the disciples to go and heal others. James continued to follow Jesus despite having a painful disability. This is the conversation between Jesus and James: “You mean I can heal others? I find that difficult to imagine with my condition, which you haven’t healed. Do you want to be healed? Yes, of course, if that’s possible. I think you’ve seen enough to know it’s possible. Then why haven’t you? Because I trust you.” Shocked by Jesus’ reply James reacts, “What?” Jesus explains, “Little James, precious little James. I could heal you right now, and you’d have a good story to tell. But there are already dozens who could tell that story, and there will be hundreds more, even thousands. But think of the story that you have, especially in this journey to come if I don’t heal you, to know how to proclaim that you praise God in spite of this, to know how to focus on all that matters. So much more than the body, to show people that you can be patient with your suffering here on earth. Because you know you will spend eternity with no suffering. Not everyone can understand that. How many people do you think Father and I can trust this with? Not many.” St. James couldn’t hide his disappointment. He tears up. Then he processed it and finally came around. Jesus assured him, “You will be healed. It’s only a matter of time.” The truth is James was able to give more glory to God because people would be able to see that James is still being faithful to God, continues to preach and heal others, even though he hasn’t been healed himself. I know what some of you may be thinking, trusting God and accepting God’s will is not always easy.

In today's first reading we hear about Solomon bringing the Ark of the Covenant from the tabernacle, which was a temporary dwelling place to the permanent place, the Temple of the Lord. There's a background to this. Even though Solomon built the temple, it was actually Solomon's father David who wanted to build the Temple for the Lord. When he asked for God's guidance to see if he should build the temple of the Lord, God rejected his offer. Why did God reject David's offer? Because David was a warrior king, known for his military conquests. He had shed too much blood in battle. God wanted the temple to be built during a time of peace, which was more fitting for such a sacred space. So God gave permission to Solomon to build the temple. Although David was not allowed to build the temple, his loving zeal for the Lord never waned. Perhaps he was disappointed, but he still devoted himself to making strategic plans and mobilizing resources setting the stage for Solomon's success. David didn't just gather whatever was available. He sought the best quality. He sent messengers to Lebanon to procure cedar from the finest forests, ensuring durability and beauty in the temple construction. He also organized skilled artisans and labourers, and collected gold, silver and precious stones.

King David's job wasn't to complete the construction but help his son Solomon to one day build the Temple. He did his part. As for the family and friends who brought their loved ones to Jesus, they also did their part by bringing them to Jesus. The truth is we may not always get what we ask for, but we can still do our part and remain faithful to God. To sum it all up, let me share with you the prayer St. John Henry Newman wrote. It's called, "The Mission of My Life."

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for nothing. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place. Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.