

***Behold I am about to create a new heavens and a new earth;
the things of the past shall not be remembered.***

Isaiah 65:17

In this Tuesday's readings, at the pool of Bethesda, we meet one of the many tantalizing, unanswered questions of the Gospels. ... Listen to the circumstances in John, chapter 5:

A man, sick for 38 years, sits a short distance from a healing pool. But even that short distance is too great for his withered body. Jesus sees this limiting distance. He asks the man, "Do you want to be cured?" The man explains that, yes, he does, but he can never reach the spirited water in time. There is no one to carry him and he is too incapacitated to take himself.

But we ask ourselves why, after 38 years of frustration, had the man not moved closer to his only chance for healing? Why, in all that time, had he not designed a new way to seize the shimmering grace just beyond his grasp?

A host of motivations prevents us from moving toward wholeness. We can become comfortable in our dysfunction. We can lose faith that change is possible. We can be fearful of anything new. In this Gospel, Jesus is telling us to stop blocking God's grace. With the crippled man, he encourages us as well, "Get up off your mat and walk."

In this week's readings, the prophet Isaiah reiterates God's challenge: "Behold I am about to create a new heavens and a new earth," he says. "The things of the past shall not be remembered." It is time to let go of the harbored hesitations keeping us from fullness of life in God. May we have the courage to take his hand, stand up and walk toward Easter.