

When I was in third grade, I noticed that the blackboard in class seemed to not always be very easy to read. I gave up my prime seating in the last row and moved closer to the front of the classroom. Every couple of weeks, I'd get closer and closer until I was in the front row.

Eventually, the teacher spoke to my parents, and off I went for an eye exam. And sure enough, I was near-sighted – like pretty much every person in my family.

Not that I was thrilled to have glasses. This was 1970, and kids didn't have a choice of stylish frames. The most style I could get was horn-rimmed glasses in black or fake tortoise shell. My brother already had black, so I was relegated to tortoise shell.

Needless to say, this did NOT contribute to my standing among my peers.

In today's first reading, we hear a vision of the prophet Ezekiel – who sees water pouring out of the temple in all directions. So much water, that several yards away he could see that the water was already over his head.

This water is a symbol of God's grace. Not only does this water ... this grace wash whatever it comes in contact with, but it also purifies the waters it flows into.

In the Gospel, we also hear of a healing water of Bethesda. The Hebrew word Bethesda means "House of Mercy." Jesus asks a man who was lying among the porticoes, "Do you want to be well?"

The man, instead of answering the questions, complains that nobody will help him.

Consider the irony of this – the Son of God walks up to you and asks, "Do you want to be well?" You've been lying there for 38 years, and you've gotten so used to nothing happening, that the only thing you can think to do is complain.

That, is a sort of Spiritual Nearsightedness. Seeing only the problem and missing the miracle.

Ignoring the man's complaint, Jesus heals him, and then slips away.

Like the prophet Ezekiel, we know of the depths of God's grace. And like the sick man in the Gospel, we, too, find ourselves in the House of Mercy.

What are we looking for? Are we so caught up in the immediacy of our obstacles that we almost miss the miracle? When God calls, do we complain of what's standing in the way instead of taking Him up on his offers of grace and mercy?

Let us today, as we approach this table, formulate our request for Jesus. What do we want most of all? And as we wade through the river of grace pouring out of the Sacrament, soon to be placed on the altar, this Sacrament which we are to receive, let us, in this House of Mercy, be ready to ask – regardless of the obstacles – whatever we may need. God is here, Jesus is here – and he's asking "Do you want it?" What will you tell Him?