

FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Lord continues to call us to conversion, to leave behind our old selves and walk in the newness of life that Christ has won for us. On July 18, the Church celebrates the feast of Saint Camillus de Lellis, a man whose life cries out the power of the Kerygma: that God can take even the most broken, sinful, and wounded existence and transform it into a living sign of His mercy and love.

Camillus was born in 1550 in Italy. He grew up wild and neglected, the son of a soldier. Tall and strong, he followed in his father's footsteps into the army, but his heart was captive to the vice of gambling. He lost everything: money, weapons, and dignity. He found himself destitute on the streets. A chronic wound in his leg tormented him for life, a sign of his inner brokenness. Like so many of us before the Lord touches us, Camillus lived far from God, driven by passions, anger, and self-destruction.

Yet the Lord, rich in mercy, did not abandon him. Through a gradual process of conversion, marked by failure, illness, and the patient accompaniment of others, Camillus encountered the living Christ. He began to serve the sick in a hospital for the incurable, first as a patient, then as a servant. Dismissed for his quarrelsome spirit, he returned, humbled. The Lord changed his heart.

Ordained a priest at age 34, Camillus founded the Camillians, the Ministers of the Infirm. His order took a fourth vow: to serve the sick, even the plague-stricken, at the risk of their own lives, out of love for God. They wore a red cross on their habit, a sign of the Paschal mystery, the Cross that saves.

Saint Camillus shows us that no wound is too deep, no sin too great, no past too ruined for the Lord's redemption. As the Apostle Paul tells us, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Camillus's life was a true exodus: from slavery to gambling and violence, through the desert of suffering and purification, into the Promised Land of service and charity. He saw in every sick person the face of the suffering Christ. He taught his brothers to care not only for bodies but for souls; to console, to evangelize, to accompany the dying into the arms of the Father.

The Lord invites us to the same path. In the Eucharist that we celebrate every week, we too are called to become "ministers of the infirm," not necessarily by founding hospitals, but by carrying the red cross of love in our families, our parish, and our daily lives. Who is the "sick" person the Lord places before you today? The elderly neighbor, the struggling friend, the one wounded by life or by sin? Will we pass by like the priest and Levite, or will we become good Samaritans?

Saint Camillus, pray for us that we may allow the Lord to heal our wounds and make us instruments of His healing for others. May our journey deepen our faith, so that like Camillus, we may proclaim with our lives: "Christ is risen! He has the power to save and to renew!" Let us walk together toward the fullness of the Passover.

Peace,