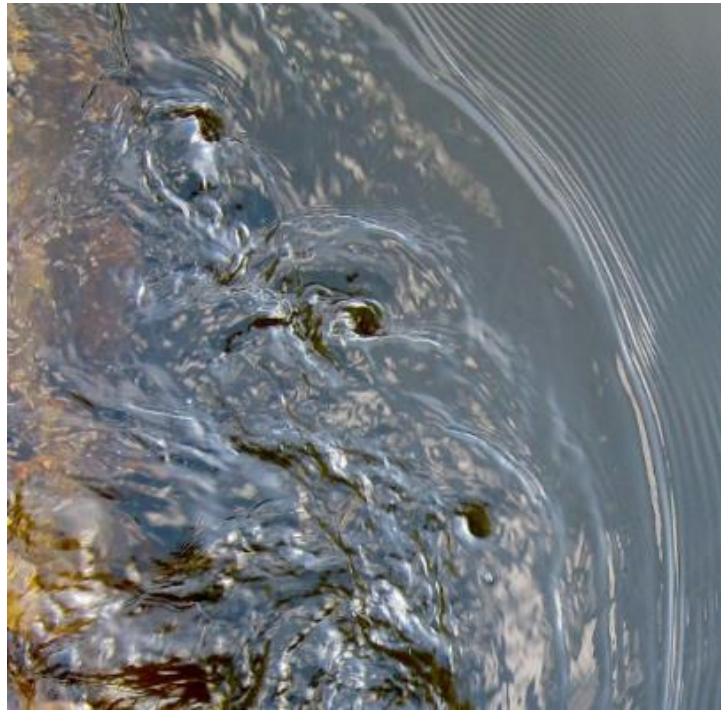


# The Miracles: The Pool of Bethesda

St Winefride's well is associated with miracle healing, but what does this really mean? Maybe we can think more deeply about this by finding Jesus in the place of 'miracle waters'.



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## John 5.1-9

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years [waiting for the stirring of the water; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was made well from whatever disease that person had.] When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?' The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.' Jesus said to him, 'Stand up, take your mat and walk.' At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

In this account the sick man is lying hopelessly by a pool that is thought to provide miraculous healing. The section in brackets is an explanation added by some authorities to explain why the man was there. When the water began to stir this was seen as an indication that divine power was passing into the pool for healing.

Jesus, however, does not need to put the man into the pool and doesn't try to. Instead, he asks him a very pertinent question – do you *want* to be made well? Bishop John V Taylor once pointed out that this was a completely critical question -Jesus doesn't just randomly act to help people – they have to have agency in their own transformation and decision to follow Jesus.

But we might notice that while Jesus doesn't need the pool, he is present where the pool is. The people go there because it is a physical location with a tradition of healing and change. So perhaps those who seek out such places are precisely those who may well meet Jesus in those places and find more than just what they thought they were looking for. Places where miracles are supposed to happen can be places where Jesus meets us and tells us get up and get going for the sake of his kingdom.

### Some questions to think and talk about:

- Many people seek out places of miracle healing even if they do not have a faith. Why do you think they might be drawn to such places?
- What do you think Jesus was actually doing at the Pool of Bethesda?
- Why do you think Jesus first asked if the man wanted to be healed?
- How do you think people might encounter Jesus at St Winefride's well and what could we do to help that happen?



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