

Proclamation of the Gospel

The Lord be with you.
And with your Spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to St. Mark.
Glory to You, O Lord.

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him, and he stayed close to the sea. One of the synagogue officials, named Jairus, came forward. Seeing Him he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with Him, saying, "My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay your hands on her that she may get well and live." He went off with him, and a large crowd followed him and pressed upon him.

There was a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years. She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. She said, "If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured." Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who has touched my clothes?" But his disciples said to Jesus, "You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you ask, 'Who touched me?'" And he looked around to see who had done it. The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction."

While he was still speaking, people from the synagogue official's house arrived and said, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the teacher any longer?" Disregarding the message that was reported, Jesus said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid; just have faith." He did not allow anyone to accompany him inside except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they arrived at the house of the synagogue official, he caught sight of a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. So he went in and said to them, "Why this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep." And they ridiculed him. Then he put them all out. He took along the child's father and mother and those who were with him and entered the room where the child was. He took the child by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise!" The girl, a child of twelve, arose immediately and walked around. At that they were utterly astounded. He gave strict orders that no one should know this and said that she should be given something to eat.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily by Fr. Gerry Hurley

Pretty dramatic events in the Gospel. Two extraordinary stories. One — restoration to fullness of health. The second one — restoration to life, physical life. Very dramatic.

I would like to focus on the first one. This marvelous healing story of the woman with the hemorrhage. What a delightful event. I would like to look at it very specifically from a Eucharistic perspective. Imagine this woman coming here to Eucharist at St. Paul Catholic Church....5:30 Mass 8:00, 10:30 ????

The woman who came to Jesus was desperate. For twelve years she had been suffering from an illness and had many painful and fruitless treatments at the hands of doctors and specialists. It had also cost her dearlyspent all she had. She had exhausted all human possibilities of healing. Right?

Now she hears about Jesus. Who do you think told her ?? In your opinion who at this mass would be one of the most likely candidates to have told her? Why? Why not you? Yes of course it could be you ! She believed that if only she could touch the hem of his garment she would be healed. (People in those days believed that it was sufficient to touch the clothes of a holy person to get a cure.) I guess it is fair to say that we still believe that..... yes. ! Isn't that what relics are ? This lady showed great determination in getting through the crowd. HOWEVERShe WAS NOT seeking an encounter with Jesus. What she was looking for was a “quick-fix. Rather fascinating. She would have been a great Catholic Right ?

Often we too opt for the “quick-fix”, even though we realize that it is unsatisfactory, and that we are being short-changed. We opt for the quick Mass Yes ... We opt for the quick confession, (Tell my sins, make it as painless as possible, make and Act of Contrition, get absolution, and maybe Penance, and run!) It can be the same with my visit to the Doctor Ok Doc. All of that is well and good but can you just give me the prescription..... and I will get going !

Interesting that we don't like to be treated in a hasty or impersonal manner. Right ? Nobody does ! So why do we then opt for the “quick-fix” Seems a little strange ! But I am pretty sure it is because we just shy away from Personal Encounters ! Why is that ? I am sure it is because we know that a Personal Encounter is much more demanding of us. We are never sure what may be asked of us. Personal Encounters can be pretty scary. We prefer to get it over with as quickly and painlessly as possible.

This woman's faith was rewarded greatly. She got her quick cure. However as she was about to disappear into the crowd, into anonymity, Jesus reaches out to her. It seems clear that Jesus didn't believe in this kind of anonymous cure. Jesus wasn't about just giving healing ! Jesus wanted relationship. He always dealt with people on a personal level. How strikingly the passage describes it: “Aware at once that power had gone from Him” It is a clear reminder that every cure, every healing, takes something out of Him. In other words He is Engaged.

Jesus insisted on having a face-to-face encounter. How powerful is that. He wasn't thinking of Himself.... He was thinking of her. Despite the embarrassment, the fear, and trembling, He knew she would feel better afterwards. Jesus fully understood that this Daughter, needed not just physical healing, but psychological, emotional, and spiritual healing as well. After 12 years of sickness and not getting better, but worse, she must have been feeling bad about herself and her lot. Very likely she also felt alienated from God.

So Jesus met her on His terms ! He had so much more to offer her. We see His sensitivity and care for her. A woman with a hemorrhage would have been regarded by the religious leadership as ritually unclean. She had no business in the crowd, and by touching Jesus she would have rendered Him unclean also, at least others thought so. Yet there was no scolding, no reckoning, no judgement.

“My Daughter, My Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in Peace and be cured of your affliction.” This frightened daughter, poor, sick, trembling, untouchable, daughter is saved by her faith in Him a relationship with Him. This my friends, is what we have been trying to deal with these past 4 years ChristLife ... Faith-Sharing Groups This is what it is all about.

“Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the Sin of the world..... The Fear of the world”. This is what Eucharist is. In speaking to her and extending love, He let her know she was completely healednot just physically. What a comfort it must have been for that daughter. In this Eucharist the very same is made available to every daughter here, and every son as well.

How good she must have felt going home from there. You too can share in that feeling..... but it requires Faith, and letting go of anything that hinders that faith — any bitterness any resentment, any hatred, any un-forgiveness. How much better this healing was for that lady, than an impersonal, hasty, secretive, cure ? Jesus made her feel as if she was the only person in the world.

Down here in the south we say : He made her day ! He desires to make your day, too !