

GOSPEL

Mark 5:21-43

When Jesus had crossed in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered round him and he stayed by the lakeside. Then one of the synagogue officials came up, Jairus by name, and seeing him, fell at his feet and pleaded with him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter is desperately sick. Do come and lay your hands on her to make her better and save her life.' Jesus went with him and a large crowd followed him; they were pressing all round him.

Now there was a woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years; after long and painful treatment under various doctors, she had spent all she had without being any the better for it, in fact, she was getting worse. She had heard about Jesus, and she came up behind him through the crowd and touched his cloak. 'If I can touch even his clothes,' she had told herself 'I will be well again.' And the source of the bleeding dried up instantly, and she felt in herself that she was cured of her complaint. Immediately aware that power had gone out from him, Jesus turned round in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' His disciples said to him, 'You see how the crowd is pressing round you and yet you say, "Who touched me?"' But he continued to look all round to see who had done it. Then the woman came forward, frightened and trembling because she knew what had happened to her, and she fell at his feet and told him the whole truth. 'My daughter,' he said 'your faith has restored you to health; go in peace and be free from your complaint.'

While he was still speaking some people arrived from the house of the synagogue official to say, 'Your daughter is dead: why put the Master to any further trouble?' But Jesus had overheard this remark of theirs and he said to the official, 'Do not be afraid; only have faith.' And he allowed no one to go with him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. So they came to the official's house and Jesus noticed all the commotion, with people weeping and wailing unrestrainedly. He went in and said to them, 'Why all this commotion and crying? The child is not dead, but asleep.' But they laughed at him. So he turned them all out and, taking with him the child's father and mother

and his own companions, he went into the place where the child lay. And taking the child by the hand he said to her, 'Talitha, kum!' which means, 'little girl, I tell you to get up.' The little girl got up at once and began to walk about, for she was twelve years old. At this they were overcome with astonishment, and he ordered them strictly not to let anyone know about it, and told them to give her something to eat.

A REFLECTION OF POPE FRANCIS

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Today's Gospel presents the account of the resurrection of a young, 12-year-old girl, the daughter of a one of the leaders of the synagogue, who falls at Jesus' feet and beseeches him: "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live" (Mk 5:23). In this prayer we hear the concern of every father for the life and well-being of his child. We also hear the great faith which that man has in Jesus. And when news arrives that the little girl is dead, Jesus tells him: "Do not fear, only believe" (v. 36). These words from Jesus give us courage! And He frequently also says them to us: "Do not fear, only believe". Entering the house, the Lord sends away all those who are weeping and wailing and turns to the dead girl, saying: "Little girl, I say to you, arise" (v. 41). And immediately the little girl rose and began to walk. Here we see Jesus' absolute power over death, which for Him is like a dream from which one can awaken.

The Evangelist inserts another episode in this account: the healing of a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years. Because of this ailment, which, according to the culture of the time, rendered her "impure", she was forced to avoid all human contact. The poor woman was condemned to a civic death. In the midst of a the crowd following Jesus, this unknown woman says to herself: "If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well" (v. 28). And thus it happened. The need to be freed urges her to dare and her faith "snatches",

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so to speak, healing from the Lord. She who believes “touches” Jesus and draws from Him a saving grace. This is faith: to touch Jesus is to draw from Him the grace that saves. It saves us, it saves our spiritual life, it saves us from so many problems. Jesus notices and, in the midst of the people, looks for the woman’s face. She steps forward trembling and He says to her: “Daughter, your faith has made you well” (v. 34). It is the voice of the heavenly Father who speaks in Jesus: “Daughter, you are not cursed, you are not excluded, you are my child!”. And every time Jesus approaches us, when we go forth from Him with faith, we feel this from the Father: “Child, you are my son, you are my daughter! You are healed. I forgive everyone for everything. I heal all people and all things.

These two episodes — a healing and a resurrection — share one core: faith. The message is clear, and it can be summed up in one question: do we believe that Jesus can heal us and can raise us from the dead? The entire Gospel is written in the light of this faith: Jesus is risen, He has conquered death, and by his victory we too will rise again. This faith, which for the first Christians was sure, can tarnish and become uncertain, to the point that some may confuse resurrection with reincarnation. The Word of God this Sunday invites us to live in the certainty of the Resurrection: Jesus is the Lord, Jesus has power over evil and over death, and He wants to lead us to house of the Father, where life reigns. And there we will all

meet again, all of us here in this square today, we will meet again in the house of the Father, in the life that Jesus will give us.

The Resurrection of Christ acts in history as the principle of renewal and hope. Anyone who is desperate and tired to death, if he entrusts himself to Jesus and to his love, can begin to live again. And to begin a new life, to change life is a way of rising again, of resurrecting. Faith is a force of life, it gives fullness to our humanity; and those who believe in Christ must acknowledge this in order to promote life in every situation, in order to let everyone, especially the weakest, experience the love of God who frees and saves.

Let us ask the Lord, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, for the gift of a strong and courageous faith, that might urge us to be diffusers of hope and life among our brothers and sisters.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/ Homily?



Head: Pope Francis reminds us that "Jesus is the Lord, Jesus has power over evil and over death, and He wants to lead us to [the] house of the Father, where life reigns." Do you believe this? What does it mean to believe this?



Heart: Do you believe that God heals today? Why or why not?



Hands: Taking a step of faith, consider praying for each other specifically for areas of healing needed during your time of prayer (being mindful to pray for those present and not simply their friends or loved ones).

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’