

July 1, 2018
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Mark 5:21-43

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 him, "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.

Background:

Some scripture scholars believe that Mark has deliberately linked the cures of these two women, so that together their significant will become more apparent. The similarities and the differences in the two stories are significant.

Both cures involve women who have lost their value in their community. The older woman is not able to conceive because of her irregular menstruation cycle, and the young daughter is not healthy enough. Both are ritually unclean and contact with either would make a person themselves also unclean. Both women have "twelve" in their story: the woman has been dealing with her illness for twelve years, and the girl is twelve years of age. In both cases it is the touch, the contact with Jesus, which brings healing to each of them, even while in both cases it jeopardizes Jesus' ritual purity. Jesus not only heals both of them, but also restores them to their place in the community. With the woman, this is symbolized by Jesus calling her "daughter" and acknowledging that she is both cured and saved (Mark 5:34). With Jairus' daughter, Jesus tells her parents to give her something to eat (Mark 5:43). In this culture, eating together always implies the establishment and recognition of a relationship.

There are also some notable differences in the two accounts. Jairus, the synagogue official, is named by Mark. He approaches Jesus openly in public and makes his request known. The woman who suffers with an irregular menstruation cycle is not named. She approaches Jesus covertly and touches his garment, violating social and religious protocols. She is a woman, and ritually unclean, but she is cured. This is the only occasion recorded in the gospel where Jesus does not initiate the healing. Instead, the one afflicted reaches out, and of her own belief touches the power of God present in the person of Jesus, and snatches God's healing to restore herself. Jesus'

response is also significant. He alone, at first, is aware that something unusual has happened, that power has gone out of him. To the astonishment of the crowd and the disciples, he seeks out the person. He acknowledges not only the cure, but also her faith, even if she has come to that faith after she has exhausted her resources on many doctors. Nonetheless Jesus calls her “daughter,” and he tells her to go in peace.

Reflection Questions:

1. When I think of Jairus coming and kneeling before Jesus, I am aware within me...
2. When I think of the woman having exhausted her resources without being cured, I find myself...
3. What do you think Jairus was like?
4. What do you think the woman who suffered from the hemorrhages was like?
5. The woman in this gospel was breaking with socially acceptable behavior. She had not kept her distance so as not to bring ritual impurity on others. Have you ever been so in need that you were willing to disregard social norms to find help? Or to help another?
6. If I had been one of Jesus disciples when he stopped and asked “who touched me,” I would have probably responded...
7. If I was one of Jesus’ disciples and heard Jesus tell Jairus "Do not be afraid; just have faith," I would have been thinking to myself...
8. When I consider Jesus walking past the crowd and into the room with the dead girl, I...
9. Can you take some time to talk with God about how you are feeling as you consider this text, or about times you have asked for healing, or about your own need for healing, or about some other awareness that arose within you as you reflected on this gospel?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to annemarie.lom@gmail.com

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Excerpts from the readings for July 1, 2018, the Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living. He fashioned all things

that they might have being; and the creatures of the world are wholesome, and there is not a destructive drug among them nor any domain of the netherworld on earth, for justice is undying. For God formed man to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made him. But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who belong to his company experience it.

I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me and did not let my enemies rejoice over me. You brought me up from the netherworld; you preserved me from among those going into the pit. Sing praise to the Lord, give thanks to his holy name. His anger lasts but a moment; a lifetime, his good will. At nightfall, weeping enters in, but with the dawn, rejoicing. You changed my mourning into dancing; O Lord, my God, forever will I give you thanks.

Brothers and sisters: As you excel in every respect, in faith, discourse, knowledge, all earnestness, and in the love we have for you, may you excel in this gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. Not that others should have relief while you are burdened, but that as a matter of equality your abundance at present should supply their needs, so that their abundance may supply your needs. As it is written: Whoever had much did not have more, and whoever had little did not have less.

One of the synagogue officials, named Jairus, came forward. Seeing Jesus, 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. There was a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years at the hands of many doctors. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. 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?" His disciples said, "You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you ask, 'Who touched me?'" 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." People from the synagogue official's house arrived and said, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the teacher?" Disregarding the message, Jesus said to him, "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, he caught sight of people weeping and wailing loudly. So he went in and said, "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. He said, "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.

Excerpts from Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24; Psalm 30:2-6, 11-13; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; and Mark 5:21-43