

### 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – 07-01-18

If there is one word that sums up today's gospel reading, I would say "desperate."

A father named Jairus and an unnamed woman, desperate.

A father desperate for healing for his daughter who is critically ill, and a woman, desperate because for 12 years "she suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had, yet she was not helped but only grew worse."

Desperate, they both fall to their knees, the father pleading earnestly with Jesus saying, "My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay your hand on her that she may get well and live."

This desperate woman, having "felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction," falls at Jesus' feet, telling him the whole truth. For her, the truth was her affliction, her hope, her audacious, unlawful decision to touch him and the wondrous result it brought. For the moment, that was her whole truth: she was suffering, she hoped for a cure and she received it.

What Jesus does for each is beyond comprehension and opens new horizons.

For the woman, Jesus calls her "daughter," indicating that she was receiving not only physical healing but also life from him as he did from his Father.

"Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction."

We hear no more about her. We are not told her name. She may have been one of the women who continued to follow Jesus and who remained at the foot of the cross, sharing now in his suffering and agony. We simply do not know.

The woman Jesus called his daughter is representative of all people who reach out for Christ's help, trusting that their plea will touch God and open to how the touch of God can transform them.

Jairus seemed not so blessed. "Your daughter has died; why trouble the teacher any longer."

Isn't that how people often respond when they feel their prayers haven't been answered in the way they wanted? "Why bother?" "Why take the trouble to pray, to ask, to seek, to knock?" They give up.

To all those, and to us, Jesus' response is simple and direct, "Do not be afraid; just have faith."

"Do not be afraid; just have faith."

Even if your hope seems dead, just have faith.

Even if you can't see a way out, just have faith.

Even if your marriage is falling apart, you or your children are caught in addiction, your job sucks, your neighborhood is unsafe, your cancer has returned, do not be afraid.

Fall at the feet of Jesus. Cry out to him. Reach out to him. Touch him in Holy Eucharist, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick. Do not be afraid; just have faith.

I know that I cannot preach this to you without challenging myself first.

As I was praying with this gospel, I realized how little faith I have. I saw once again that I am not desperate enough for Jesus. I am not.

I am not desperate enough for Jesus, desperate like those mothers bringing their children from El Salvador and Nicaragua seeking asylum from the gang violence, abuse, rape and random killings.

I am not desperate enough for Jesus like those risking their lives on the waters to flee poverty, violence, kidnapping and terrorists in Africa.

I am not desperate enough for Jesus to want him and his will for my life to be what guides me every moment of my life.

I am not desperate enough for Jesus because I want to be in control. I want to call the shots. I want to know my future will unfold.

I am not desperate enough for Jesus because sometimes I don't really believe that I am blessed. Instead, I cling to fear, to doubt, to depression and to the edge of despair.

Why? I'm not exactly sure but I sense that it has to do with lack of faith, lack of trust that Jesus is enough, that Jesus is all I need, that Jesus truly loves me as he says he does.

I don't know if this makes any sense to you or resonates in your life. If not, simply let this pass as my Sunday morning musings and hope for a better homily next week.

If they do resonate, then join me in falling at the feet of Jesus this week in desperate prayer, calling out, crying out, "Increase my faith. I don't want to be afraid. I want to trust. I want to surrender. I want to be yours."

Then let Jesus take our hand and speak to our hearts, "Talitha kum," "arise."

I.

Our first reading is from the first chapter of the Book of Wisdom. The first few lines reflect the first chapters of Genesis, reminding us that humanity is made in God's image and that every distortion or destruction of the image is the work of the Evil One, Satan, the prince of lies.

Pope Francis in "Laudato Si," calls us to take responsibility for this earth that God has created and be mindful of the world's most vulnerable by cultivating gratitude and a loving awareness that we are connected to every human being and to all of creation. This is how we can praise and thank God who, as we'll hear, fashioned all things and made us after God's own imperishable, divine nature.

II.

The background to this reading is that Paul had decided to collect and bring money to the Christians suffering in Jerusalem. While their distress was sufficient reason for working on their behalf, Paul also wanted to use this as an expression of their unity in Christ.

St. Paul wasn't simply asking for money, he was asking his people to act like they were one in Christ. He was calling the Corinthians not simply to financial generosity, but to authenticity in their faith through solidarity with their brothers and sisters in need. His words are as real for us today as they were for the Corinthians then.