



CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES

Archdiocese of Miami - Ministry of Christian Formation

June 28, 2015

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gospel reading Mark 5:21-43 *[To be read aloud]*

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.

Brief commentary:

Last week we met a Jesus who calms the storm at sea, who has the power over the forces of chaos. It was a rich story of Mark's gospel, dense with meaning regarding discipleship and containing important questions for reflection. Today's readings similarly express God's power over the ultimate demise of wholeness and life itself: disease and death. And in today's gospel, as well as last week's, Jesus calls for faith. No sooner does Jesus and his disciples disembark from the boat that eager crowds gather to see and hear him, some seeking healing, others seeking hope, liberation, answers, meaning, solace, strength. He comes to serve those who are in need. We hear today about two astonishing stories about what happens when divine power and human faith meet. One is of a frantic father who is certain that Jesus can heal his dying daughter. Yet, in spite of his attempts and of Jesus' good intentions, her time runs short and healing comes too late. Against all odds, all appearances and all logic, however, Jesus "disregards" the news of her passing, and instead assures her father: "Do not be afraid; just have faith." In the company of the girl's parents and his disciples Jesus "took the girl's hand" and at his command she arose. Someone far more powerful than even death has entered their lives. And what seems an interruption on Jesus' way to heal Jairus' daughter is for Jesus another opportunity to make a difference in the life of a person – in this case, that of a daring woman whose faith Jesus recognizes and rewards. In a world that often does not recognize the equality and dignity of women, in today's gospel we see a Jesus who is concerned for women and who treats them as his equals. We too come to Jesus with our troubles and concerns, our desperations and our hopes; and with our prayers and with our cries we fall at his feet as did Jairus and we seek to touch him as did the woman. Our faith in him gives us the certainty that in turn he will take our hand as he did Jairus' daughter. And even when all seems lost we know that "with God all things are possible" beyond our understanding, beyond all human possibilities, beyond what we can imagine. Like Jesus Christians too must do those things that make a difference in people's lives, attending to those who call on us for help, allowing ourselves to be touched and moved, seeking whom we can serve and hold their hands to restore them. Paraphrasing Vatican II, people are not *'in our way'*; people *'are our way'*. For Jesus people came first, so too it must be for the members of the Church.

Today's reading offers significant messages:

- Jesus' mission was to do those things that make a real difference in the lives of people, bringing healing, offering wisdom for life, liberating the oppressed, giving sight to the blind, giving new life.
- Like Jairus and like the woman with the hemorrhages our faith in Jesus must be heartfelt and bold, certain that with him all things are possible, even when after all possibilities are exhausted.
- Like Jesus we too are to put people first by responding to those who cry out to us, by seeking those who we can help, by putting people first.

For our shared or personal reflection: *After a brief pause for silent reflection share your answers, ideas or feelings.*

- How have I experienced the healing that comes from Jesus Christ even when what we desire is not possible?
- Realizing that we often struggle with faith, do I ask God for the grace of a stronger and bolder faith?
- How am I responding to – and seeking – people in need in order to make a difference in their lives?

Suggested readings: Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 1499-1532