

# 13th Sunday 2015

## **Introduction**

How many times do we find ourselves anxious and upset? I don't know about you but it happens to me all the time. I might wonder how I will get through a difficult meeting or how I might be worried about the health of a priest.

I'll bet you sometimes feel the same way. There are, of course, many things to worry about but toward the top of the list about is health - the health of one's family and one's own health.

## **Jairus and the Woman with a Hemorrhages**

In the Gospel we just met two people who have the same concerns that we do. One was named Jairus, a synagogue official, and the other was an unnamed woman afflicted with hemorrhages. The synagogue official came to Jesus because his daughter was about to die and the woman approached Jesus because of her devastating illness.

Both people were anxious and upset and both took a risk in approaching Jesus, but still they approached Jesus with a trusting faith. Let's look at each of them in turn to see what we can learn from them.

Every parent knows that feeling when their children are seriously ill. You can almost hear the anxiety in Jairus' voice as he approaches the Lord: "My daughter is at the point of death. Please come and lay your hands on her that she may get well and live." Jairus' love for his daughter overrode the risk he took in approach Jesus. He was a layman who managed the synagogue's activities and finances. He was also aware that the last time Jesus visited a synagogue, it didn't go well. In fact, some in the synagogue hatched a plot to kill Jesus, so he knew that in approaching Jesus he'd be criticized, maybe even lose his job. Jairus threw caution to the wind just the way parents often do to save a child. As he did so often in the Gospels, Jesus responded to plea of this father for his child. Even after news was received that she had died and the disciples tried to scuttle the trip to the synagogue official's house, Jesus reassured the man: "Do not be afraid. Just have faith." To his everlasting credit, Jairus took Jesus at his word. In raising her up, Jesus wielded the power of God over

life and death. Everyone, including Jesus' closest followers, were astounded. We can well imagine that Jairus became one of Jesus' closest followers.

Along the way to Jairus' house, the woman with hemorrhages approached Jesus. Let us pause for a moment over her plight. Because of her particular affliction, she was not only drained of her strength but she was also considered "unclean" under the Law of Moses, so she was something of a social outcast. What's more she had spent all her savings on doctors who weren't able to cure her. Unlike Jairus, she did not make a direct request to Jesus. Because her lowly status, she approached Jesus "with fear and trembling". In her desperation, she thought that if she could just get near Jesus, if she could just "touch his clothes", she would be saved. So she makes her way into the crowd which was jostling Jesus, a crowd the disciples were having a hard time managing. People were bumping up against Jesus, but she was trying to get near to Jesus because she had heard about him. The minute she touched his clothes, she was cured. Jesus did not let the moment pass. He wanted to know who had touched him because he wanted to speak to her. He wanted to tell her that it was her faith that had saved her.

### **What Jairus and the Woman Teach Us**

How important that we spend a moment thinking about what these two figures in the Gospel have to teach us in our daily anxieties and in our relationship with the Lord Jesus. We have concerns similar to these two people from biblical times. We know what it is to wake up in the middle of the night and to worry about some problem we seem powerless to deal with. We might try watching television or eating things we shouldn't, or reading a book. To tell the truth, I've done all those things myself. But what we really need to do is to take the risk of approach Jesus in faith. It sounds so simple, doesn't it?

But we know from experience, there are risks and roadblocks not unlike the ones that Jairus and the woman with hemorrhages experienced. One of the biggest roadblocks in our life of faith is fear, not that holy fear, not that sense of wonderment about God's power and glory, but rather that fear which paralyzes us, that stops us dead in our tracks. Our problems might loom so great in our minds and hearts that we imagine that not even the Lord could assist us in our need. At other times, when we think of approaching Jesus with a request, we may be afraid to do so

because of a sense of unworthiness. Thinking about our sins, we may say to ourselves, "The Lord will never listen to me." If only we knew, how much the Lord wants to hear from us! If only we believed that God does not spurn a contrite, humble heart!

What Jairus and the woman in today's Gospel teach us is this: the way to experience Jesus' saving power is to reject fear & to yield to faith, a deeply personal faith, that comes from living contact with Jesus. And we can have living contact with Jesus, when we spend time each day in conversation with the Lord; when we read the Scriptures and let the voice of Jesus resonate in our hearts; when we approach the Lord in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and asked to be healed of our sins; when we receive the Lord in the Eucharist with gratitude and joy. Then we realize that troubles and worries that beset us are the key that opens our hearts to the Lord whose love is stronger than sin and more powerful than death. Then we can pray as did the great St. Teresa of Avila: "Let nothing disturb you. Let nothing frighten you. All things are passing away. God never changes. Patience obtains all things. Whoever has God lacks nothing. God alone suffices." May God bless us and keep us always in his love!