

## Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle B June 28, 2009

Readings: Wisdom 1:13-15, 2:23-24; 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15; Mark 5:21-43

### Faith in Action

Last weekend we were in Steubenville, Ohio at the Franciscan University. We were there with the youth group for our annual youth conference. The teens got to share their faith with others from across the country and Canada. There was a lot of loud music and singing; lifting up voices and hands praising and worshiping the Lord. The youth heard some very frank presentations about living their faith and making changes in their lives. They were encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be healed and to remove the baggage that they are carrying around with them. But the biggest focus of the weekend, as always, was on the Eucharist, the source and summit of our lives as Christians.

We attended Mass all three days of the weekend and received Christ's Body into our bodies. Friday's Mass, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, kicked off the Year of the Priest. Each Mass was concelebrated by over 20 priests and on Sunday the Bishop of Steubenville was our celebrant. We had a Holy Hour with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Friday evening with everyone kneeling on the floor of the field house or on the hard bleachers; there were no kneelers. And there was great reverence. On Saturday evening, the Eucharist was once again exposed, but this time it was not just placed on the altar; the priest processed through the congregation with the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance. He went between all the rows of kneeling teens. He went up into the bleachers. Jesus came to the youth and they could look upon His presence. Some on the aisles could reach out and essentially touch the hem of His garments.

The youth at the conference were at all different places on their faith journeys; some made a great step of conversion on their journey over the weekend. Some looked upon the Eucharist and saw the face of Christ; some saw only a piece of bread. And some were touched by the Holy Spirit and turned to Jesus in faith and asked to be healed like the woman in our gospel. In faith she reached out to try to touch His cloak, trusting in His healing power. And Jesus asked: "***Who touched my clothes?***"

The disciples were a bit perplexed because there was a great crowd around Jesus; many were touching His clothes. But only one received His healing power because she had great faith. To receive God's healing power we need both faith and action. Simply touching Jesus' clothes as a ritualistic gesture, without faith, would not have cured the women. Staying back from Jesus, even if she had faith, probably would not have cured her either. She put her faith into action, reached out to touch Jesus, and He said: "***Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.***"

In a similar way, Jairus came to Jesus to ask for the life of his daughter. He came and humbly fell at the feet of Jesus. And Jesus went to Jairus' home and He took the girl by the hand and told her to rise. The touch of Jesus is very important to his healings. He touched the leper who was considered unclean, who no one else would touch, and His touch made him clean. He touched the eyes of the blind man and gave him sight. He put His finger into the deaf man's ears and touched his tongue and he could hear and speak.

And Jesus wants to touch each and every one of us. He wants to heal us and make us whole. But first we must reach out to Him and humbly fall at His feet in faith. We must have faith, but we must also put that faith into action and approach the Lord and place our cares and concerns at His feet and trust that He will heal the troubles in our lives. This is one of the reasons we come to Mass on Sunday. We could sit in the comfort of our air-conditioned homes and pray; believing God is everywhere, I do not need to come to church. But it is important, if we are able, to come to Mass to be in the physical presence of Christ; to drop down on our knees in the presence of the entire community. To reach out and receive the touch of Christ as we receive Him in the Eucharist.

Come to Mass with faith and with a purpose. If we come and just go through the motions, standing and kneeling and sitting at the right times, we will be in Jesus' presence. We will touch his clothes, but will we be healed? Many crowded around Jesus and inadvertently touched His clothes, but only one received His healing power; the one who came in faith and a purpose and fell at His feet.

At another place in the gospels Jesus said: ***“And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”*** (Luke 11:9-10) God wants us to come to Him faith and will provide us with what we need. We heard in the first reading that ***“by the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who belong to his company experience it.”*** Death and evil and sickness entered the world through the devil. Jesus offers us life and goodness and health. Knock on His door; ask for healing, ask for His goodness, and He will give you eternal life.

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