



PARISH OF ST. AGATHA

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Pope Francis: Jesus heals our hearts wounded from lack of love

Pope Francis recalls that Jesus goes beyond our sins and prejudices to heal our heart from the wounds and mistakes of the past. He reflected on the day's Gospel (Mk 5:21-42). The Pope said Jesus encounters two dramatic situations in this passage, which speak to us about death and disease. "Jesus lets Himself be touched by our suffering and our death," he said, "and He works two signs of healing to tell us that neither suffering nor death have the last word."

Health and affections

Since illness is still at the centre of our attention due to the pandemic, Pope Francis focused his remarks especially on the healing of the woman with hemorrhages. "More than her health," he noted, "her affections were compromised: she had blood loss and therefore, according to the mindset of the time, she was deemed impure." All this meant that she was marginalized and left without the possibility of a husband or a family. "She lived alone, with a wounded heart." The Pope pointed out that the "most serious illness in life is a lack of love, and not being able to love."

Useless searching for love

He then reflected on how we can find healing in this story of a nameless woman who represents us all. She had spent lots of money on various ineffective treatments which only made her condition worse. The Pope lamented that we, too, seek useless remedies for our lack of love, throwing ourselves into vain searches for success and money, even looking online. But, he added, the woman finally chose to seek direct, physical contact with Jesus. "The Lord waits for us to encounter Him," said the Pope, "to open our hearts to Him, for us, like the woman, to touch His garment in order to heal. Because, by growing in intimacy with Jesus, we are healed in our affections."

Seeking Jesus' healing gaze

Pope Francis pointed out that Jesus responds favourably to the woman's touch, seeking her out of the pressing crowd. "This is Jesus' gaze: there are many people, but He goes in search of a face and a heart full of faith. He does not look at the whole, but at the individual." The Pope added that Jesus "does not stop at the wounds and mistakes of the past, but goes beyond sins and prejudices" to reach the heart. Jesus, he said, heals precisely that woman who had been rejected by everyone, praising her faith and calling her "daughter".

Love alone heals life

Finally, Pope Francis encouraged everyone to "let Jesus look at and heal your heart." If we have already experienced His gaze, then we should turn to those around us who may feel wounded and alone to show them love. "Jesus asks you for a gaze that does not stop at the outward appearance, but that goes to the heart: a gaze not judgmental, but welcoming," he said, "Because love alone heals life." (Vatican News/ Devin Watkins).

HAVE FAITH AND BELIEVE AND TRUST IN THE POWER OF JESUS

Again, as we journey through what the Church calls, Ordinary Time, we see Jesus testing our faith in Him again, especially in our belief that He can heal us from the disease of sin, which prepares us for our own Resurrection from the dead. No one can enter into Heaven, if not cured of the disease of sin beforehand. The woman who was twelve years suffering from a haemorrhage, had put her faith and trust in doctors but to no avail. In desperation, she turns to Jesus, who she believes can heal her. She came up secretly to Him through the crowd and touched His cloak. The source of the bleeding dried up instantly, and she was cured. After she confessed to be the one who drew power from Him, He said; *My daughter, your faith has restored you to health; go in peace and be free from your complaint.*

JESUS CALLS SINNERS TO BE HEALED

God Himself reveals His identity through His Son, when referring to her as *My daughter*. God walked the earth to draw sinners to Himself, to allow Himself be touched by us, in order to be healed from spiritual death of the soul (sin), which He heals in Confession. He will also heal the soul who truly believes in Him, in the Resurrection of our body, when our earthly life is over. For this to happen, we have to confess and profess our Faith in Him every week, by remembering Him at Mass. He makes Himself visible to us today in the Sacraments of His Church. God's Power is infinite, as He continues on to raise the girl from the dead. Before He arrived to the 12 year old girl's bedside, some people came to say she was dead and *not to put the Master to any trouble*. But of course, the whole point of Jesus coming into the world - is to raise the dead. *Do not be afraid; only have faith*, He said. On arrival, the people mocked and laughed at Jesus, when He explained that the girl was only asleep and not dead. Note, how her parents cling to His Words, and follow Him into the room where she lay, because they trusted and had faith in His Words.

JESUS IS ETERNAL LIFE

The consoling message today, is that Jesus is the Resurrection and Eternal Life. If we believe in Him, even though we die, we will live (John 15:25-26). After raising her from her 'sleep', Jesus asked to give the girl something to eat. This is a metaphor for the Food of Immortality, which is Himself in the Eucharist. Jesus has entered into an Eternal Covenant with us. In this Covenant (Relationship), is the promise and pledge that He will raise us up (Get Up!), on the Last Day. We have to collaborate and participate in this Eternal Relationship, by entering into a Holy Communion with God now. We fulfil this by receiving His Son in physical Holy Communion form, meaning receiving the Food of Eternal Life. In paragraph 1811 in the Diary of St. Faustina of Divine Mercy, Jesus tells her the following. *But I want to tell you that eternal life must begin already here on earth through Holy Communion. Each Holy Communion makes you more capable of communing with God throughout eternity.* Jesus never introduced the culture of death into our lives. The First Reading today (Wisdom 1:13-15,2:23-24), informs us clearly that it was *'the devil's envy that brought death into the world'*, and the sin of Adam and Eve; as a result, we are all bound to die. Those who choose to cling to the ways of the devil on earth, are making the choice to eternally suffer in the next world called *Hades*. However, the Good News that if we repent for our sins, Heaven awaits us all.

TWELVE DISCIPLES

The figure 12 has huge significance, in that, it symbolises change or a new beginning, a new Way of a Life to live. Jesus appointed the 12 disciples to begin the New Church. After finding Jesus in the Temple, He was 12 years old and told Mary and Joseph that He must now begin doing His Father's work. Some Saints tell us that Mary died and assumed up into Heaven, 12 years after the Death of Jesus. This 12 years marks a new heavenly beginning for Mary. 12 year old children are called to be anointed by the Seal of the Holy Spirit, in the Sacrament of Confirmation. They too, are called to a new beginning, as spiritual soldiers of Christ, and to speak a language of love and forgiveness. The sick woman was 12 years suffering and Jesus gave her a new beginning through His Healing. Jairus' daughter also began a new life at 12 years old. Let us all fulfil our Confirmation Promise to God and bear witness to our Faith in order to qualify for Eternal Life someday. God bless, Fr. Brendan.