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“With Jesus, we can face reality”

In his 25 June general audience, Pope Leo XIV continued his catechetical cycle on Jesus Christ, our hope, speaking about the healing of the hemorrhaging woman and the daughter of Jairus.

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Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we will again consider the healings of Jesus as a sign of hope. In Him, there is a strength that we too

can experience when we enter into a relationship with His Person.

A very widespread ailment of our time is the fatigue of living: reality seems to us to be too complex, burdensome, difficult to face. And so we switch off, we fall asleep, in the delusion that, upon waking, things will be different. But reality has to be faced, and together with Jesus, we can do it well. At times we feel blocked by the judgment of those who claim to put labels on others.

It seems to me that these situations can find an answer in a passage from the Gospel of Mark, where two stories intertwine: that of the twelve-year-old girl, who is sick in bed and is dying; and that of a woman who has been bleeding for precisely twelve years, and seeks out Jesus in order to be healed (cf. *Mk* 5:21-43).

Between these two female figures, the Evangelist places the character of

the girl's father: he does not stay at home complaining about his daughter's illness, but rather he goes out and asks for help. Although he is an official of the synagogue, he makes no demands on account of his social position. When it is necessary to wait, he does not lose his patience, and he waits. And when they come to tell him that his daughter is dead and it is pointless to disturb the Master, he continues to have faith and to hope.

The conversation between this father and Jesus is interrupted by the bleeding woman, who manages to come close to Jesus and to touch his cloak (v. 27). This woman, with great courage, made the decision that would change her life: everyone continued to tell her to keep her distance, to keep out of view. They had condemned her to stay hidden and isolated. At times, we too can be victims of the judgment of others,

who presume to put a robe on us that is not our own. And then we suffer, and cannot come out of it.

That woman embarks on the path of salvation when the faith that Jesus can heal her germinates: so, she finds the strength to come out and go in search of him. She wants to reach out and at least touch his garment.

Around Jesus there is a large crowd, and therefore many people were touching him, and yet nothing happens to them. Instead, when this woman touches Jesus, she is healed. Where does the difference lie? In his commentary on this point of the text, Saint Augustine says – in Jesus' name – “The crowd jostles, faith touches” (*Sermon 243, 2, 2*). It is thus: every time we perform an act of faith addressed to Jesus, contact is established with Him, and immediately his grace comes out from Him. At times we are unaware

of it, but in a secret and real way, grace reaches us and gradually transforms our life from within.

Perhaps today too, many people approach Jesus in a superficial way, without truly believing in his power. We walk the surfaces of our churches, but maybe our heart is elsewhere! This woman, silent and anonymous, conquers her fears, touches the heart of Jesus with her hands, considered unclean because of her illness. And she is immediately healed. Jesus says to her: “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace” (*Mk 5:34*).

In the meantime, the father receives the news that his daughter is dead. Jesus says to him: “Do not be afraid; just have faith” (v. 36). He then goes to the house and, seeing that everyone is weeping and wailing, says: “The child is not dead but asleep” (v. 39). He enters the

chamber where the child is lying, takes her hand, and says to her: “*Talità kum,*” “Little girl, arise!” The girl stands up and starts to walk (cf. vv. 41-42). Jesus’ act shows us that not only does He heal from every illness, but He also awakens from death. For God, who is eternal Life, death of the body is like sleep. True death is that of the soul: of this we must be afraid!

One last detail: Jesus, after reviving the child, tells the parents to give her something to eat (cf. v. 43). Here is another very concrete sign of Jesus’ closeness to our humanity. But we can also understand it in a deeper sense, and ask ourselves: when our children are in crisis and need spiritual nourishment, do we know how to give it to them? And how can we, if we ourselves are not nourished by the Gospel?

Dear brothers and sisters, in life there are moments of disappointment and discouragement, and there is also the experience of death. Let us learn from that woman, from that father: let us go to Jesus: He can heal us, He can revive us. Jesus is our hope!

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