

Tuesday's Gospel: Value of the Ordinary

Gospel for Tuesday in the 4th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 5:21-43*)

And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him; and he was beside the sea. Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and seeing him, he fell at his feet, and besought him, saying, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on

her, so that she may be made well, and live.” And he went with him.

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. And there was a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, “If I touch even his garments, I shall be made well.” And immediately the hemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone forth from him, immediately turned about in the crowd, and said, “Who touched my garments?” And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’” And he looked around

to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had been done to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler’s house some who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?” But ignoring what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. When they came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, he saw a tumult, and people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a tumult and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him.

But he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi"; which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the girl got up and walked (she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Commentary

Today's Gospel presents us with two extraordinary miracles. The main one is the resurrection of Jairus' daughter from the dead, an act of infinite power. But a second miracle takes place in the middle of the

narrative (an interruption, as it were): the healing of the woman with the hemorrhage. This woman acted secretly because she had to; she couldn't approach Jesus openly because her condition made her unclean. But she had faith and Jesus specifically attributes her healing to it: "Daughter, your faith has made you well."

Jesus was God. No one healing was more difficult than any other. But we see how he carried out each of them differently: one with a word, the other with a touch or a simple gesture, etc. Christ uses these small details to instruct his disciples, and also to instruct us. There is something sacramental in these actions: the sacred is manifested through otherwise normal signs and words.

Saint Mark's Gospel tells us the exact words, in Aramaic, that Jesus spoke

when he healed Jairus' daughter: *Talitha qum*, "Little girl, I say to you, arise" (Mk 5:41). The evangelist seems to want to show us how God made use of human words, in a local dialect, to work the miracle.

Ordinary words become a divine instrument, producing supernatural and miraculous effects.

Our words and actions may also seem ordinary and even commonplace. But if we unite them to God's power, they too will become channels of his grace, and He will draw extraordinary results from them and work miracles. As in the case of the woman with the hemorrhage, everything depends on our faith. Do we have the faith she had?

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