

FR. JOHN'S HOMILY

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, June 27, 2021

A sign on a church marquee display reads: *Is Prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?* It was catchy and got my attention. It does get you to think about our relationship with God. Hopefully we are allowing God to lead us and guide us at all times. Honestly many of us only pray when we are in a crisis. We only turn to God when we are in trouble. In this case God is my spare tire. but we know God is called to be much more than a spare tire in our lives.

When we are desperate, we turn to the Lord. But it is clear that for most of us we would rather handle things ourselves. When we have no other options, when we are at our wits end, we cry out to the Lord to help us. In times of trouble we realize how much we need the Lord. But when things are running smoothly, when our finances and our relationships are healthy and productive, then why pray to the Lord. I have this taken care of; I don't need God at this time in my life.

There is nothing wrong with turning to the Lord when we are desperate. People in crisis continually approached Jesus throughout his public ministry. God is loving and caring and He does respond to sincere faith. In today's Gospel both Jairus, the synagogue leader, and the woman with the hemorrhage come to Jesus because they had no place else to turn. So they cry out to Jesus. We too need to cry out to Jesus. We should never hesitate to cry out to the Lord when we find ourselves in a crisis.

In faith we believe that God will hear us and will act. Again hopefully it is not just when we are in need. If so, then we are missing out on knowing God as a loving, compassionate, caring God, who loves us as His children if we only pray to Him in need, or crisis. If children only turn to their parents in time of need, or crisis, or only when they want something, what kind of relationship is that? It's not a very healthy relationship. I do know that when children say or do acts of love and kindness toward parents, it goes a long way. This also applies to our relationship with God? Yes, we can turn to the Lord at any time in our lives. He is near in times of crisis and in times of peace.

If we could begin each day remembering God's love, if we could be conscious of God's presence as we face each event and each person, how much deeper, more thankful, more joyful our lives would be. That kind of living is exactly what we need. Then when crisis do arrive in our lives we are better prepared. These days we need to be better prepared, come what may. We face many uncertainties these days; we can pray to the Lord to strengthen our faith.

Today's Gospel reports two stories of healing, two stories of people we find in a time of crisis. One story tells us about a father's great love for his dying daughter. The other story tells us about a desperate woman who risks much as she seeks healing from Jesus. In each story, the request for healing is itself a courageous act of faith.

Jairus (the name meaning God enlightens) is the synagogue official, a man of considerable standing in the Jewish community. I think he was a man of prayer who sought the Lord daily in his life. But now he is distraught over his daughter's sickness. He humbles himself before the Lord, he kneels before Jesus, and asks him to heal her. Although Mark doesn't provide many details, we can imagine that his daughter has been ill for some time and that her condition is deteriorating, close to dying. I wonder how many days and nights Jarius and his wife cried out to God in prayer. "*Jesus if you come to my house and lay hands on my daughter she will get well.*" Jesus follows. Of all the requests this day, Jesus responds to Jarius.

As Jesus leaves with Jairus, Mark describes a second person who seeks healing from Jesus, a woman with a hemorrhage. We don't even know her name. Her long slow illness had to leave her in a weakened condition. We know very little about her, except she exhausted all her means for healing and found no relief. And according to Mosaic Law she would have been rendered Unclean; therefore unable to approach the temple. How she got near Jesus we can only speculate, but she did. She had faith in Jesus knowing if she could get near and just touch his clothes not even his person, she would be healed. This woman secretly touches Jesus from behind and is immediately cured. Of all the people touching Jesus, why is she the only who finds healing this day?

In response, Jesus turns and asks who touched him. Jesus' disciples, always a little clueless in Mark's Gospel, help us to picture this scene. The crowds are pushing in on Jesus, and yet he, knowing that power has gone out of him, asks who touched him. The woman could have remained anonymous, yet at Jesus' question she steps forward and acknowledges what she has done. Jesus responds by acknowledging her as a model of faith and sends her away in peace. *"Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace, you are free."*

Jesus was being touch my many, but what was it about the women's touch that made Jesus stop: the touch of faith. What was it about Jairus's request in the midst of all the request He was receiving that He responded: Faith. We can also wonder what this healing of the woman did for Jairus. Did he realize all the more that in Jesus there was Hope for his little girl? Maybe Jarius was saying to himself, Jesus does answer prayers, there is hope for my little girl.

What happened to Jairus when he hears the news from the messengers who suddenly come and confirm Jairus's worst fear: his daughter has died. Jesus curiously ignores their message and reassures Jairus. Do not be afraid, just have faith. When they arrive at Jarius's home, they find family and friends mourning the girl's death. Jesus enters the room of the dead girl, along with her mother and father, with Peter, James and John, He takes her by the hand and instructs her to arise. Jairus's faith in Jesus has not been in vain; his daughter is restored to life.

Both found healing and answers to the prayers by turning to Jesus. We don't know what happen after these stories. However, we can imagine that Jarius, each time he saw his daughter, from that day forward, he gave thanks to God. I bet a day didn't go by that the woman with the hemorrhage didn't give thanks to God. They knew God was with them, in all times.

So here we are today, coming out of a Pandemic, but still not out of the woods as they say. At times we find ourselves in dire need. If you are at your wit's end, then by all means call out to God for help. To believe that God will hear and help us is the Gospel message today. We don't have to wait for a crisis to turn to the Lord. What does God want? He wants us, His children, to call out to Him in Faith and in Love at all times.

Of all the people around Jesus, today, how many will ask with sincere and humble faith like Jarius and the woman with the hemorrhage? This is what Jesus is looking for today. He is waiting to say once again, "Your faith has saved you, Go in Peace."