

July 1, 2018. Thirteenth Sunday in ordinary time

A woman was sitting in the front row with little baby at Mass. As Father was giving his homily, the baby started crying. She tried to comfort him but he got louder and louder and louder. So she finally stood up and decided to take the baby to the back, the vestibule. As she did father stopped his homily and said, "Oh no don't go, the babies not bothering me." She turned and she looked at him and said, "I'm sorry father, you're bothering my baby." As I tell that, I am wondering how much am I bothering little babies. Am I the reason they're crying?

Today's gospel introduces us to 2 H words, very key in the ministry of Jesus, and of being a Christian, and of healing. The first one is, hands. Hands. Every time we see Jesus, except for once, he is touching someone, he is lifting someone up like the little girl today. "Talitha kum," "Little girl get up, and he pulled her up." The blind man he drew outside the city so he could cure him. And lepers, he touched them and they got well. Jesus is a hands-on person, the Church is a hands on entity, we're not about long distance, except one time Jesus did that with the centurion. Centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof. Jesus was so amazed with his faith that he cured long distance. People still think the church should be long distance. They ask me all the time, "Father, can I call you on the phone and give you my confession?" No! I have to see if you were truly contrite and not making things up. That's like standing outside on the street corner and giving ashes to anyone who wants to drive by. No no no. But Jesus is a hands-on person, he touches it's all about his hands. He stretched out his hands and he died. In the other story that was in the gospel in the long form that I didn't read about the woman with the hemorrhage, what cured her? Her hands, she reached out and touched Jesus his cloak. Her hands were the instrument of her healing. Hands are about everything. Jesus wants his hands on us, Jesus wants his hands to take away our pain our suffering. He wants to hold us he wants to hold us he wants to caresses he wants to love us. But not long distance. Some people want Him to be long distance, but He's not. It's all about touch. The sacraments are about touch. I've been to many hospitals when there's an AIDS patient dying. "Father, you need to put a mask on and gloves when you give the sacrament of anointing." Can't do it. I don't put the gloves on, to annoy the person I touch them, I'm not worried about it. So far as I've found out, AIDS hasn't been spread by the anointing of the sick. So I don't worry about it. It's touch, touch. Children who do not get touched when their babies die, they die. It's so key to us, that's why Jesus touches us. So hands are an important thing. So, when Jesus went to heaven he left us with our hands to help each other.

The other H word that Jesus has in the gospel is humility. Humility. When we have humility Jesus can do anything. When we don't have true humility it doesn't happen. When Jesus went to his hometown he tried to do miracles but there wasn't humility, there was just pride, he couldn't do anything. We see humility in our gospel, this synagogue official, Jairus. He's a Pharisee, he doesn't like Jesus, he agrees with the rest of the Pharisees, that Jesus is causing trouble. But, he sees what Jesus is doing and he admits to himself, it's true. And he has no other recourse, he's at the end of his rope. So he gets down on his knees in front of Jesus and says, "Please, come heal my daughter, she's sick." True humility. Nowhere else to turn, nothing else he can do, he goes to God open, completely and totally. The woman with the hemorrhage. She's been paying doctors for all these years, she's out of money. She's done everything that humankind can have her do and so now she's at the end of her rope. So much so that she is willing to go death, to be stoned to death, by touching a man's clothing. She is healed because of her hand touching and because of true humility. It was the last desperate act of someone who really wanted help. When we open ourselves up like that, everything can happen

In our world today, all we hear is, "Suck it up." We hear, "Take some more Aleve." We here I've got a card for another doctor. We pass off all of this, we think we have other options and yet we wonder why God doesn't heal us. We're not at the end of our rope we're not true humility being practiced.

There was a sister who was telling me, she didn't know what to do with the rest of her life. People think well she's a sister, well you still have to have a job as well as a vocation. So, she said, I don't know what to do with the rest of my life. So she prayed and she prayed and she prayed, she was getting desperate. Finally after four months, she threw her prayer book on the ground (that's allowed, some people get all upset about that) She threw it on the ground and she said, "Oh my God I've had enough! If you don't want to help me then too bad!" The next day a guy came to her and said, "Sister, would you pray over me please. I have this kind of problem. She prayed over him and he was healed. She realized she should be a healer and so she's been praying over people and healing them ever since.

Another woman ended up lying in bed, doctors examined her and couldn't find anything wrong with her, but she couldn't move. She could talk, she could breathe, she could eat, but that's all she could do. She prayed and she prayed and she prayed, nothing happened. Finally, she just got mad and screamed it God (And that's allowed, too), "Well, if you are not going to do anything, fine! The next day, she woke up, got out of bed, and walked and nobody knows why. It's allowed to get to the point of frustration, when you're angry, and yell at God. Then, you're at the end of your rope, you have nowhere else to turn, you're going to be truly humble. Our world doesn't like humility; Satan doesn't like humility because it means you recognize God. You recognize He's there and He's a higher power. With humility, God is able to do tremendous things because we allow him, we truly let him into ourselves. But at the same time we have to be practicing helping hands, because that means we're Christians, followers of Christ. Christ laid his hands on people Christ lifted his hands, He helped people. We have to do the same thing. You know, we're getting into a world of no touch and that's wrong because we are human beings and the greatest sense organ we have is our skin. We need to be touched. The great hug doctor, Leo Bascalia, God rest his soul, said that you have to have seven hugs a day to be normal. If you're not getting seven hugs a day you're not normal, I'm not normal OK. You know that already. But he says we have to be touched in order to be normal in order to function normally. Doctors will tell you people that who are loved, people that have families that care for them, that come to see them and hug them, they get well 50% faster than anybody else. So, humility and hands. If we are humble, if we are at the end of our rope, if we are desperate, that's when we're truly humble, that's when we open ourselves up and that's when Jesus's helping hands can truly do wonders for each one of us.

God bless you