

The Power of Faith

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Jesus told the cured woman, “Daughter your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.” In today’s gospel, we witness two miracles performed by Jesus but the curing of the hemorrhaging woman tells us about the depth of her faith. She suffered for twelve years trying to find so to speak “the miracle drug,” but she was not successful except wasting her resources. Yet she never gave up because her faith sustained her hope believing that one day she will be wholesome.

In the Hebrew Scripture and culture, hemorrhaging, whether it is regular cycle of a woman or illness is unclean, defiling those whom the woman touches. Not to mention of self-consciousness and public shame involved. The woman broke all cultural norms by joining the crowd following Jesus, allegedly defiling every person she pushed and shoved to touch Jesus. Yet conscious of her situation that openly asking Jesus to cure from her blood flowing illness would expose herself to the public. Therefore, she preferred to be discrete, armed with deep faith, touching his garment would suffice to cure her malady. Jesus immediately recognized the touch of his garment was not accidental of push and shove, it was intentional and Jesus said, “Who has touched my clothes?” The woman who thought to be discrete now is exposed to the crowd, witnessing her miraculous cure by touching Jesus’ cloak. The cured woman was also healed, becoming whole, immediately Jesus reinstated her into the community using the crowd as a witness.

Jesus question, “Who touched me?” is prefaced in the Gospel reading, “Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out of him, turned around in the crowd and asked.” Empowering others has become a cliché as if we have a warehouse of power to give to others. Yet empowering implies self-emptying as we read in the second reading, St. Paul writes, “For you know the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.” St. Paul qualifies his statement, “Not that others should have relief while you are burdened, but that as a matter of equality your abundance at the present time should supply their needs...” Jesus’s divine power made the woman whole and raised the daughter of the Synagogue chaplain from death.

Finally, today’s scripture readings focus on the dignity of the human person created for glory not for misery. In the first reading, the Book of Wisdom tells us, “For God formed man to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made him.” The healing and the raising of the dead girl all point out to God’s plan for us to be whole and happy, which requires of us faith and trust. For those who believe, nothing is impossible with God.