

13 Sunday B

June 27, 2021

St. Patrick

“Do not fear. Only believe.”

Twelve is the number in the Gospel for this Sunday. Jairus’ daughter was 12-years-old. The hemorrhaging woman had been bleeding for twelve years.

It’s the only miracle story in the four Gospels where Jesus doesn’t initiate the cure (1).

“If I but touch Jesus’ clothes, I will be made well,” so the bleeding woman said to herself.

For twelve years she had been bleeding. She had tried everything. She followed every lead that she had found online and, in the process, became penniless.

With Jesus, this woman took a daring risk. The crowd elbowing and jostling one another to get close to Jesus, she broke the rules. She reached out and purposely touched Jesus.

And she was healed.

“Who touched me?”—Jesus then asked.

She came forward and told Jesus the whole truth. We don’t know how she said it, but she could have blurted out something like this, confessing: “Forgive me—for wanting to be healed. Forgive me for having touched you. Forgive me for having made you unclean. Forgive me for being a woman. I’m sorry. Forgive me...” (2)

“Daughter, *your* faith has made you well. Go in peace...”

Not a word about the rules. Not a word about the distance, back then, a woman was to keep from a man. Jesus put all the accolades on her. **“*Your* faith has made you well.”**

“Do not fear. Only believe.”

Jesus said that when the parents of the twelve-year-old girl learned their daughter had died. When they arrived at their home—neighbors and family members wailing in their grief—Jesus told everybody, **“The child is not dead, but sleeping.”**

Sleeping. **“The child...is sleeping.”** And the folks in the neighborhood laughed at him.

After each Funeral Mass I go with the family to the cemetery for the burial. The word “cemetery”—we say it so often, but do we know what it means?—comes from a Greek word meaning, “dormitory,” that is, a place where folks are sleeping together.

Recently I went with the immediate family for the burial of their parent. Years ago the other parent had died, and the new grave was right next to that one. The parent who had died some twenty years ago chose the spot because it’s right near a lovely shady tree, and had told the children to have a chicken dinner when they come to visit.

Sure enough, after the prayers at the grave, the family got chicken, and other snacks, and laid spreads across the ground to sit on. We all gathered around the shady tree. No one in the family had thought what would be happening at that time.

The cemetery workers were slowly lowering the casket in the ground. One son, then a second one...then grandchildren: They gathered and watched the casket being lowered six feet. In silence, they watched. After the casket was lowered...well, right next to the grave was the pile of dirt. One son went and got a handful of dirt and let it fall on the grave of their other parent who had now died. Then—no one had planned it—one after another each in the family got a handful of dirt and tossed it onto the grave.

A cemetery—yes, it means a “dormitory,” a place for folks to sleep.

As we jostle with Jesus in our everyday life, like the hemorrhaging woman, may our faith in him save us. Then, as we know that one day we’ll rest in the grave, dirt piled over us, may we not fear, but believe that this same Jesus will raise us up from our sleep when he returns in glory.

“Do not fear. Only believe.”

(1) Dianne Bergant, C.S.A., with Richard Fragomeni, *Preaching the New Lectionary Year B* (Collegeville, MN,: The Liturgical Press, 1999) pg. 290.”

(2) Father Joseph Donders, “Afraid to Go This Far,” in *Give Us This Day—June 2021* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2021) pg. 289-90.

General Intercessions

June 17, 2021

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Bring healing to our church, that the Holy Spirit might lead us in our future together; we pray to you, O Lord—

Let your church be a place of welcome for the stranger, the outcast, the sinner, and the seeker; we pray to you, O Lord—

Protect military women and men, as well as all fire and police personnel: bring them to their homes safely; we pray to you, O Lord—

Relieve the pain of those who are ill or grieving; we pray to you, O Lord—

Embrace with your love all who have died, and give peace to their loved ones; especially as we remember Katherine McArthur Sigafos, and all who have perished from the coronavirus; we pray to you, O Lord—