

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

June 27, 2021

Mario Michiaki Yamanouchi
Bishop of the Diocese of Saitama

"Daughter, your faith has saved you well. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction" (Mark 5:34).

Brothers and Sisters,

This Sunday, Mark the Evangelist tells us the story of two miraculous healings that Jesus performed for two women: the daughter of Jairus, one of the synagogue officials, and a nameless woman afflicted with hemorrhages. Let us pray together that the deep compassion Jesus poured upon these women may strengthen our faith in him.

Jesus heals the daughter of Jairus the synagogue official (Mark 5:21-24, 35b-43)

In the Gospel we see Jairus coming back from the synagogue. Being the synagogue official has not helped him find anyone who would heal his critically ill daughter, so he is desperately heading for Jesus by the lake. Jairus' daughter, in this case, could be the image of the wandering people. Disillusioned with the old system of Judaism and thinking his daughter would die unless he looks for another source of life, Jairus found Jesus and pleaded earnestly with him.

Mark tells us in his concise writing how Jesus responded to Jairus' pleading. When people from Jairus' house arrived and said, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the teacher any longer?", Jesus said to him, "Do not be afraid; just have faith," and went on to his house only with Peter, James, and John. When they

arrived at the house, he went straight to the room where the girl was, took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise!" And the girl arose immediately and walked around.

Here those who fear death can turn to the core of the wisdom in the First Reading from the Book of Wisdom (1:13-15, 2:23-24): "God did not make death, ...he fashioned all things that they might have being" If we know this wisdom, our faith in Jesus will be increased.

If our church wants to remain the church of Jesus, it will have to go out to meet Jesus our Master. And as Pope Francis always says, we also need to go out to meet and embrace those who seek help in difficulties and those who suffer. St. Paul reminds us of its importance today in the Second Reading (2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15). For the Church to be renewed, it must become a "Church going out", that is, a church open to encounter, especially, those who suffer in society. There, without a doubt, we meet Jesus and his Gospel, and there we will better hear the same words that Jesus addressed to Jairus: "Do not be afraid; just have faith."

The healing of the woman who had been hemorrhaging for 12 years (Mark 5:25-35).

The scene is surprising. Mark the Evangelist presents an unknown woman as a model of faith for the Christian communities.

From her we can learn how to seek and find Jesus, how to come into healing contact with him and how to find in him the strength to begin a new life full of peace and health.

Unlike the daughter of Jairus, this woman is nobody, she is a total stranger. We only know that she suffers from a feminine ailment for years, which prevents her from living her life as a woman, wife and mother in a healthy way. She suffers a lot, physically and morally. She has spent all that she had on seeking help from doctors, but no one has been able to cure her. However, she refuses to live

forever as a sick woman. When she heard about Jesus, she must have firmly believed in his healing power and wanted him to help her. She is alone. No one helps her to get closer to Jesus, but she will find a way to meet him. The sight of so many people surrounding Jesus makes it impossible for her to expect that Jesus himself will recognize her, come up to her and lay his hands on her. Compelled by her faith in Jesus, she sought him herself instead and touched his clothes. And Jesus immediately understood her desire for a healthier life.

Everything happened in secret except for Jesus, but he turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who has touched my clothes?" When the woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling and told Jesus the whole truth, what compassionate words he addressed to her: "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction." (Mark 5:34)

This woman, with her ability to seek and accept the salvation of Jesus, is a model of faith for all of us.

After listening to these two examples of faith, let us ask Jesus, "Lord, increase our faith more and more," just as the apostles asked him: "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17:5).

Note: All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE).