

Faith vs. Fear Fourth Week in Ordinary Time Tuesday, February 4, 2014 8:15 AM
2 Sm 18:9-10, 14b, 24-25a, 30—19:3; **Mk 5:21-43** (Different angles of faith: expectation and confidence, refusal to be afraid)

Today's long story is really about faith, **different angles of faith**. In the first case, the woman touches Jesus, as do many people, but she alone makes contact. That's the point that Mark makes so clear. The disciples say, "But look at how this crowd hems you in." But only **one person experienced the power of Jesus coming into her**. Why? Because she had faith. **This kind of faith is a kind of expectation and confidence**. And we can see that Jesus did not always elicit this. Sometimes people were completely opposed to him.

In the second case, the **onlookers ridiculed him** when he said, "She is not dead. She is just asleep." Well, they didn't have faith. They didn't believe his analysis, his observation, his discernment, his diagnosis. They didn't accept that; **they didn't believe** that.

Jesus sent the crowd away because he is not into entertainment. He is not really a showman. But he does have **someone there: Peter, James, and John**. Those three are often with him, the select of the select, the inner circle of the inner circle; he often uses them to help him. What their role is, is not too clear, but they are often there. The other two people were **the mother and the father of the child**. They were doubtless good Jews. He was a synagogue official. Again, the issue is faith. **Jesus says, "Do not be afraid; just have faith."** Here faith is not so much confidence and expectation, but rather **faith is the refusal to be afraid**. Fear is actually quite natural in one sense. People, all animals, are imbued with an instinct to avoid danger—no doubt about that. But this fear is not that kind of instinct. This is something else.

Human beings have developed a very unsavory and unhealthy fear of death. It was the subject of the Sunday reading. **According to the Letter to the Hebrews, "The devil has**

kept the world in bondage by the fear of death.” People are kept in a prison because of the fear of death. And this is not due to any instinct God has created. It’s rather due to something else. **It’s really due to an unwillingness to face God and to submit to God and to surrender to God, and a desire to depend on oneself.** This of course is the root of all sin, depending on oneself. The problem is that we can see with our eyes that ultimately we cannot depend on ourselves. Ultimately we will all die. But **if we have lived our entire life depending on ourselves, then death must be a very fearful thing,** terrible thing, awful thing. **But for those who depend upon God it should not be.** That’s the point that Jesus is making.