

Openness to Healing Fourth Week in Ordinary Time Tuesday, February 3, 2015
8:15 AM Heb 12:1-4; **Mk 5:21-43** (St. Blase, bishop; St. Ansgar, bishop) (God's will is for all of us to be healed ultimately in the eternal embrace of God. How we get there or what road we take, that's different for each person.)

The evangelist Mark has given us so many very beautiful stories of **Jesus' healing ministry**. It is very obvious that that is **where his mission began**. We might imagine that he discovered that **he had power to heal people**. He grew up with Mary and Joseph. He was obedient to them in all things, but then at some point he realized that he had the power to heal and he went forth.

At some point in his mission **he called others to aid in this process**. But, and this is very clear, although he gave them authority to heal all diseases and expel all demons, they were not able to do quite what he was able to do. They were able to do some of the work, but not all of it. This is very important for us to keep in mind because **we the Church continue the work of the apostles, and we do extend God's healing to others, but not as perfectly as he did**.

Now if we follow the logic of the Church's sacramental nature, **it is actually the risen Christ who continues to heal; but he does not always heal in the same way, to the same degree. He uses us, but we are not always perfect conduits**. This is demonstrated already in this story of the woman with a hemorrhage. Jesus was being pressed upon by everybody in the crowd. **Only one touched him in such a way that power went out of him**. We can imagine this power to be a kind of energy that actually resided within his body, and it went out of him when this woman touched him with faith. But many touched him, and many were no doubt ill. There are so many different kinds of illness, there are so many different kinds of disorders: mental, physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual; but only one touched him in such a way that power went out of him.

So it is today as well. Yes, the risen Christ is present in our midst, but we don't all have the faith that contacts that power in a powerful way. Now is this our own fault? Not necessarily—not necessarily because when we think of it as something due to our lack, well then we are putting the emphasis on ourselves. That needn't be true. It may well be that God's plan was for this woman to be healed in this way at this time. What we have to keep in mind is **God's will is for all of us to be healed ultimately in the eternal embrace of God. How we get there or what road we take, that's different for each person**.

The mere fact that we have remarkable occurrences at places like Lourdes indicate that, yes, God does will some people to have an extraordinary, quick, immediate healing. But Lourdes itself is an indication that almost everyone that goes there comes home with some wonderful feeling of being blessed. They may not have been cured a hundred percent, but something touched them. **Many people who have been to Lourdes will tell you that, that their physical ailments remain and yet something wonderful happened at Lourdes**.

So we can be assured, first of all, that God wants to heal everyone, that **all of our ailments will be completely healed in the eternal embrace of God in eternal life**.

Meanwhile, we need to be open to whatever we need and whatever God wills to give us today, tomorrow, and the next day. We need to be open to all the various means God has to heal us, including the nursing care that we give each other, the medical expertise that we have used our own minds to develop, the various medicines and medications and therapies that have been developed. All of this is in accord with God's will that we help each other, that we creatively participate in the creation of a new world, a new heaven and a new earth. And this is something **we all share in both by participation in the service and in receiving the blessings and fruit**, again each in the manner in which God has designated, each according to our ability, each according to our need. What is that actually? We don't even know. This is what we have to seek.

Very often faith actually involves ignoring what seems to be the evidence of our senses, as in the case of the young girl. Everyone said she was dead. She looked dead. Jesus said, "No, she is only asleep." And they ridiculed him, and this is also part of unbelief. **So there are stories of faith and non-faith, unbelief, disbelief, mockery, making fun of. That's all part of the whole story. The evil one is always mocking**, tearing down, being skeptical, not believing, not cooperating; and this represents a **temptation also to every believer to stop believing**, to give up, to not care, to become indifferent, to become cold, to become cynical. That is never the way of God.

So we are called on by these stories to **be positive**, open-minded, supportive of others, supportive of ourselves, not credulous, but believing, and believing more than we see, but always realizing that **ultimately we are in God's hands**, and death itself is not the final point of our lives. **Death itself is not the end of anything, but the transition to a new level of life, the life for which we are all created.**