

## KEY TO UNLOCK THE DIVINE TREASURY

Thirteenth Sunday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006 Mark. 5:21-43; Wis. 1: 13-15, 2:23-24; II Cor. 8:7, 9, 13-15

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Today's two miracle episodes—healing of the woman afflicted with bleeding for twelve years, and bringing the dead child of Jairus back to life—are very comforting and encouraging news to all of us who in some way or other are passing through various struggles either in our spiritual or temporal life, especially for those who are beset with agonies and are so badly in need of a special divine intervention at this particular point of time.

The daughter of the synagogue official Jairus was in a hopeless condition and was on her deathbed, leaving no hope of survival. The condition of the woman with hemorrhage was no better, either. The Scripture speaks of its severity thus: *“She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse”* ( v. 26).

But both of them in their utter helplessness approached Jesus for help in full faith. Their faith in the omnipotence of Lord Jesus Christ was absolute. And they expressed it most courageously at the risk of adverse public reaction. And their faith saved them both!

At a time when there was great hostility the Scribes and the Pharisees had towards Jesus, it was very dangerous for Jairus, head of a synagogue, to express his faith in Jesus publicly. But he did it most humbly and with great confidence by falling down before Jesus in front of a huge crowd and pleading earnestly with Him, *“My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay your hands on her that she may get well and live.”* The same was the story of the woman with hemorrhage. A woman in Jesus' time could not stand on her own. To go out in public she needed the escort of a man and she could make a request to a stranger only through the male companion. This may explain why “she came up behind Jesus in the crowd” as she feared that she might be stopped by somebody from the crowd. Besides, uterine issue of blood made her ceremonially defiled according to the Mosaic Law (cfr. Lv. 15:19-25). The Jews not only regarded a woman in this state as being impure but everything she touched would become unclean as well. This might be the reason why she did not dare to touch Jesus but his garment only! But these limitations did not discourage her to approach Jesus! The gospel is very emphatic on her single-minded faith in Jesus. : *“She said, “If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured.”* The gospel of Mathew puts it thus: *She said to herself, “If only I can touch his cloak, I shall be cured.”* Her touch was something very unique! Indeed it was not a mere physical act. It was the outburst of her deep- rooted faith in Jesus' power and goodness. It was so strong that it actually made the healing power of Jesus get released from Him and to flow into her body and stop the flow of blood. The gospel describes the after- effect of her touch thus: *“Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who has touched my clothes?”*

Here, the Scripture distinguishes clearly between the crowd's pressing hard upon Jesus and this woman's mere touching His clothes. Touching the cloth is a far less noteworthy act than touching the very person. Even though the crowd virtually pressed on to his body, nothing spectacular resulted from it while the woman's mere touch on Jesus' clothes caused a great miracle! *“Daughter, your faith has saved you... be cured of your*

*affliction*”—these words of Jesus is a remarkable testimony to the uniqueness of her faith which is the expecting faith!

What is the expecting faith? Let me share with you some of my own experiences to illustrate what is expecting faith. Sixteen years ago I was preaching a parish mission in a village in India. Before the mission started a paralyzed woman was brought to the Church. She was a Hindu. She was about 45 years old. Her name was Omana. She was completely paralyzed. She could not stand or sit but only lie down. Though she had tried every treatment possible over the years it had done no good. Besides, she had tried some cultic worship of her own religion by visiting all important Hindu pilgrim centers but all was in vain. Finally she even tried witchcraft as the last resort. But it only worsened her condition. It was at this time that she and her mom heard from some Christians that Jesus could cure all illnesses. She believed it blindly and determined to come to the mission. When they brought her to the church that evening she looked like a corpse. But she listened attentively to my preaching in full faith that something was going to happen to her that night. After three hours of preaching and prayer I asked the congregation to stand up for the closing song. To everybody's surprise this paralyzed woman stood up by herself. People could not believe their eyes. Her Mom began to cry aloud in joy. The whole congregation shared her sentiments! I asked her how she got cured. I can never forget her answer; she said, ' I came here this evening with 100% certainty that Jesus would heal me today'. Dear Brothers and sisters, I learned for the first time from that Hindu woman the true meaning of 'expecting faith'. When Jesus said: "Your faith has saved you" it is this expecting faith that he meant.

Another incident I recall now is a great miracle that happened 14 years ago. At that time I was a pastor in one of the parishes in India. One evening I was asked to visit two dying brothers to give them the last rights. One was 18, and the other was 15. A team of doctors had worked hard to save their lives but in vain. The family members wanted to take them to a medical college, but the doctors firmly said that there was no use doing it because the patients were dying. They suggested that the family had better call the priest to administer the last sacraments. It was the father of these boys, who came to me and took me to the hospital. This man's behavior seemed very strange to me. Even though his two children were dying, there was no sign of sorrow or desperation in him. Instead, there was a cheerful hope in his face and in his words. As we were traveling to the hospital, he was praying in a subdued tone by singing songs of praise. When we entered the patient's ward, there was very little room left for us because a large crowd had gathered to witness the death. All of them were weeping aloud. In fact, it was very hard for me to finish the prayer because of the wailing and sobbing all around. Soon after I had finished my prayer, the father of the boys asked for my permission to have a prayer by himself. He knelt down amidst that crowd and lifting up both hands and eyes to heaven he prayed thus: "Father, these boys are not mine, but yours, now heal them and give them back to me." A prayer of great expectant faith! I returned to the church, but the unshakable faith of that man touched me deeply and so I was curious to know the fate of the two boys. The next morning I sent a messenger to see what had happened. He returned without gathering any information. In the evening, I found another young man, a smart fellow, and sent him there. I gave him the details of the patients. He met the doctor who had been treating the two boys and brought me a letter from the hospital certifying that both the boys were healed and discharged. It was the expecting faith in that fisherman, the father

of the boys that made the miracle happen. Later, I could observe this kind of faith in many other people too.

Even though many of us may not be seriously afflicted with physical ailments, still we are in need of spiritual or emotional healing. Hence the need to approach Jesus with the expecting faith. At this point, let us examine the spiritual and temporal trials we are facing now and try to find genuine solutions for them. They may be a struggle to get out of a certain habitual sin or a bad habit, or a strained relationship or a crisis in marriage, or problems at work or a financial crisis, or serious illness or old age problems or dryness in prayer life or sloth in spiritual life, and so on and so forth. The fact is that they are there in our life, no matter in whatever forms they may be. They should necessarily push us to approach Jesus Christ who declared: "I am the Way". What we need is only faith, true faith in His promise. No matter how serious and apparently insurmountable our problem is; Jesus has a solution. This is why in spite of the report of Jairus' daughter's death and the servants' discouraging words "*why trouble the teacher any longer?*", Jesus said to Jairus: "*Do not be afraid; just have faith. It was an invitation to believe: "What is impossible for human beings is possible for God"* ( Lk. 18:27). It is beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus can do anything if we have the required faith. It doesn't mean that His power is limited by our faith, rather our faith makes us worthy of his unlimited power. In fact, genuine faith is an expression of our openness to God's saving power.

The ordinary means of Jesus' healing are the sacraments, the word of God and prayer. Let us go to Confession often with the expectation to be healed of the wounds of sin. Let us offer the Sacrifice of Mass with the expectation to be healed of our spiritual, emotional and physical weakness, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Let us go to the Eucharistic Chapel often with the expectation to be comforted, instructed and strengthened by the living God in the Blessed Sacrament. Let us listen to the preaching of Word and participate in the prayer meetings with the expectation to be touched by the power of the Word and Prayer. If these expectations are strong in our hearts as we come to the Mass, Adoration and Prayer meetings, tremendous healing will take place in us every time we come before the Almighty God.

Since suffering has great saving value, in Divine Wisdom, some illnesses may be allowed for our greater good. But if we have expecting faith the Lord will heal us of the sadness and despair that we may feel about them and make us joyful amidst suffering and pain.

Let us therefore use the key of faith—the expecting faith—to unlock the Divine Treasury so that we may make use of all that Jesus has won for us by his death and resurrection. Amen.