

Homily -Mk 5: 21-43
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Crossing is a collection of 74 poems by **Rabindra Nath Tagore**, the 1st Asian to have won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. In poem no 53 from this collection, he writes: “I have come to Thee to take Thy touch before I begin my day”. Well! We are all here today to have a touch of the Lord.

Back in the mid 1980s, an American actress Ann Jillian discovered a lump on her body. She suspected it was cancerous and before she went to the doctors to have her tests done, she went to her own parish Church, named after St. Francis De Sales. And up above the door was the saying that she never had noticed before. It was from the writings of St. Francis De Sales and it read: “The same everlasting Father who cares for you today, will take care of you tomorrow and every day. Either He will shield you from suffering or He will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace then and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations”.

Jillian sensed that these words were directed to her personally and for her situation. She went into the Church and prayed for the strength to accept her ordeal. Two weeks later, she underwent a successful surgery and with God’s grace she is alive even to this day. Ann

trusted in Jesus' words given in today's Gospel, "*Do not be afraid; just have Faith.*"

The Gospel of today describes two of our Lord's miracles: the healing of a woman who suffered from a chronic bleeding disease, and the returning of the dead daughter of *Jairus* to life.

The woman with the hemorrhage was determined to meet Jesus. In fact, she had pushed and elbowed her way through the crowds to come to Jesus. "One touch and I will be cured", she said. Well, she reached out and touched the hem of his robe. And immediately, healing power flowed from Christ to her and she was cured.

And then, we have this synagogue official coming to Jesus saying: "My little daughter is desperately sick. Will you come and cure her?" But in a short time later, some officials from his house would come and inform him: "we are sorry, but your daughter has died". And on hearing this, Jesus tells him that his child is not dead, but only asleep. *Jairus* trusted in Jesus. He heard Jesus say to him: "Do not be afraid, what is needed is faith" or a different translation puts it this way: "fear is useless, what is needed is trust".

And that is what Ann Jillian discovered in her life and that is the truth you and I are challenged to hear and

absorb today: ‘that fear is useless, what is needed is trust’.

All of us have our own struggles, pains, anxieties and worries that others may not understand. Perhaps someone of us has a diagnosis of cancer, or maybe some of us are experiencing difficulty because of the inescapable aging process. Perhaps our life is being turned upside down because of family problems and tensions, or maybe the Covid 19 pandemic has had a major effect on our lives. But in all these we are asked to trust in the Lord. For Jesus says: “Do not be afraid, what is needed is faith”.

St. Ignatius of Loyola would say that “we need to pray as if everything depended upon God and work as if everything depended on us”. Now, having faith doesn’t always shield us from pain, suffering, or from all sorts of difficulties. And it is certain that eventually we will all die. But even there, what is needed is a trust that we will be carried over the threshold of death to new life. And so, the words of St. Francis that moved Anne Jillian should inspire each of us: “The same everlasting Father who cares for you today, will take care of you tomorrow and every day. Either He will shield you from suffering or He will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace then and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations”.

Let me conclude my homily with a little anecdote that I came across sometime back.

On a cold winter day, Clare and her son James went to a grocery store to pick up some winter clothes for them. And they noticed a little barefoot boy standing outside the store trying to enter in to keep himself warm. Clare went near him and began to talk to him. About five minutes later, she brought him into the store and bought him a new shoes and a pair of heavy woolen socks. And James then overheard the boy ask his mom a question. “Are you God’s wife?”. And Clare’s reply was: “No son, I’m just one of his children” to which he said: “Well! I knew you must be some kin to Him”. He quickly thanked her and ran out of the door.

Dear friends, we are here today to take the touch of the Lord through our participation in this most powerful sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. And let that touch we experience enable us to touch the life of someone in need. May our words and actions dear brothers and sisters communicate God’s mercy and healing to people who come in contact with us. And let the world be different because you and I live in this world as ambassadors of God’s love and compassion. God bless you all, **Amen.**

