

Homily. 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year. B. 29-30 June 2024.

You might recall that last weekend we heard about the wind and gale on the Sea of Galilee that nearly swamped the boat carrying Jesus and the disciples. In great fear and distress the disciples woke Jesus up. He calmed the sea and quietened the winds asking, why is it that you have so little faith? Today we hear of no less challenging crosswinds and storms blowing, catching up Jesus and his friends as soon as they made landfall, a gale of death affecting two women and those around them.

The older woman with the haemorrhage had tried many doctors of her day, yet having spent all of her money, was none the better for it. She was at her wits end and in dire straits indeed for not only was the life-blood draining out of her but, according to the rules of her culture, she was also thought to be impure and untouchable. This meant that she was cut off from contact with her family, friends and community. This was a dying and death for her, a dying of rejection and isolation, the death of intimacy, acceptance and normal human fellowship.

Desperately, without anyone left to help her, she felt forced to secretly turn to Jesus, the teacher and healer she'd heard about, her last hope. Such was her faith that she believed that just touching his clothes would be enough to restore her. It was enough and she was healed, but her secrecy had to be ended. When it was everyone knew that faith heals and that, made clean and whole again, she could rejoin the flow of her life.

While all of this was happening Jairus, a man of importance in the local community, was anxiously waiting for Jesus to get to his house and heal

his ailing daughter. She was young, about 12 years old, and should be entering the flower of her womanhood. Instead she and her family were facing death and deep grief. Due to the delay a message came that the little girl had died and that Jesus need be troubled no more by this matter. Jesus responded to this saying to Jairus; Don't be afraid. Just hold firm in your faith.

At the house a commotion of fear and sadness reigned. It seemed to all that the gale of death had triumphed sinking the little girl beneath the waves of death, but Jesus wasn't having any of this. The wailing crowd mocked him when he said the girl was asleep, not dead, so he had them turned out of the house for they had no faith or hope.

Now it was just the six of them; Jesus, Peter, James and John, Jairus and his wife left at the bedside of the dead girl. St. Mark recalls the Aramaic words Jesus spoke to her and to God; Little girl I tell you to rise up. Instantly she did, the furious winds and seas of death made calm and quiet. She started walking around so Jesus ordered that she be fed and that her raising up be kept secret, an impossible request.

These stories of women in desperate need; one older, alone and out of options, the other with family to advocate for her but still swamped by death are about who Jesus is and wants to be for us when we're at the end of our tether, loosing the fight for life. Can we see in Jesus Our Saviour who comes to our aid? Do we keep faith in him when all appears lost? Will we trust him to restore calm and quiet in our desperate days? The Good News tells us that we can and should trust in him, but as always the choice is in our hands and hearts, the act of faith is up to us.

