

Homily for the Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2021 Year B

In the Gospel we have just heard there were two examples of Jesus' power to heal.

It must be wonderful to have such a power, to know that you can, with absolute certainty, restore the health or the life of a person there who is in desperate need before you. The joy of the giver would most certainly match the joy of the receiver; it was what Jesus was there for. Healing must have given Him so much pleasure. One healing, Jairus' daughter, was in response to an explicit request, "please heal her". The other was an implicit request. No words were spoken. All the woman had to do was to touch the hem of His garment.

When Jesus performed such healings, it was not a sort of gimmick to increase peoples' faith. Great faith had to be there in the first place for the healing to happen, and then that faith was rewarded and deepened.

In the Gospels, we are told that there were places that Jesus could not heal, because there was no faith there. Even though we do not possess the great healing power of Jesus, we do have a share in His healing ministry. We cannot raise the dead to life, but the opportunities for healing are many and diverse.

Jesus healed where there was great faith and anticipation. We, for the most part, are called perhaps to heal, where there is little or no faith at all.

By that I mean no explicit faith. Someone may be just worn down by many causes, chronic pain, sadness, or loneliness. They are in need of healing but have no words to ask for it. It is for us to uncover and meet that need.

The woman touched the hem of Jesus' garment, and the healing process began. It is for us just to touch the hem of that persons need for their healing to begin.

So how do we do it?

First, we have to become sensitive to the fact that someone is in need of healing. And that sensitivity is in all of us.

We are all what has been described as 'wounded healers'. In all of our lives the years have brought with them countless moments of illness or physical pain.

We know what it is to hurt, and to survive that hurt, and so we are a huge resource of empathy and sympathy to help bear and heal that pain in others. Also, we have all had experience of spiritual or psychological pain in our lives; times of sadness, loneliness, failure and maybe even despair. Wounded indeed, but still going strong, and from the darkness of our own experience we can be a huge source of encouragement and healing to another person.

Think back to the many diverse occasions when you may have been helped or healed.

It may have only been just a kind word, an awareness that you were not alone, that someone cares. A simple thing like a loving smile or the touch of a hand or a big hug. Sometimes no words need be spoken, but much can still be said.

Knowing that someone else understands your situation and the burden is shared.

The wounds of life have gifted us with the capacity to help and heal others. We may not really be aware of it, or we are too shy to use it, but if we open up our eyes, there are many people around us who are in need of some sort of healing, and we have within us the power to help others to achieve it. As wounded healers ourselves, we share in the Healing Ministry of Christ.