

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday (B)

1<sup>st</sup> July 2018

'Touching the fringe of His garments'

Wis 1–2: *God takes no pleasure in the extinction of the living*

Ps 29: *At night there are tears, but joy comes with dawn.*

2Cor 8: *he was rich but He became poor for your sake*

Mk 5: 21–43: *the child is not dead but asleep*

At each of the three Missions we've had in recent years — once with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and twice with John Pridmore — on one of the evenings we have had the experience of a 'Healing Service' with the Eucharistic Lord. The Blessed Sacrament is placed in the monstrance for Adoration, and then one by one we approach the Lord, kneeling on the sanctuary steps, as He passes, to cling briefly to His garments — the priest's humeral veil with which he holds the monstrance — and to express our heartfelt prayers at His feet.

This beautiful and prayerful ritual, which I know many have found helpful, takes its inspiration from the event in the Gospel today, as the woman with the chronic 12yr bleeding, with such faith in Jesus, simply approaches Him to touch the hem of His garment. Jesus was immediately aware that someone had touched Him — not just bumped into Him in the crowds, or been someone with

a passing casual interest ... But someone with deep faith in Him, trustful that He is indeed her Saviour. And this is why He calls to her to show herself, not to embarrass her but to commend her, to strengthen her in faith, and to give an example of someone who did not let Jesus just pass by ignored. Many just jogged along beside the Son of God as He walked the streets of the Holy Land, oblivious to His power to change their lives and bring them healing.

Keeping our 40 Hours' Adoration this weekend is a sure way of not ignoring Jesus who is present in our midst — an antidote to indifference to the Lord. Night and day the Lord dwells here with us in the Tabernacle, in the Blessed Sacrament of His own presence that He has given us as a perfect gift. We can so easily let Jesus pass in our midst. Not just those who have not heard the Good News of Jesus's living presence in the Church, but even those who do profess the Catholic faith can live almost as if Jesus were not present. The way we come in to church, the way we behave in church, the way in which we participate lovingly in Mass — or not — these are all opportunities to show that

we acknowledge the Lord Jesus present here in the Holy Eucharist, at all hours of every day. We should consciously be people who do not ignore Jesus living here in our midst. We should live our attitude to the Eucharist the same was that the chronically suffering woman sought Him out in the streets of Capernaum. We should long to be with Him, near Him, reaching out to touch Him for He is right here.

I read in this week's *Catholic Herald* of St Manuel González García, known colloquially as the 'Bishop of the Abandoned Tabernacle.' Ordained in 1901 he was asked by his bishop to visit a rural parish, only to find when he got there that the church was so abandoned by its people that although Jesus was present in the Holy Eucharist the Tabernacle was almost abandoned, dusty and covered in cobwebs, untouched for ages. This sad sight affected the direction of his whole life, and he spent his years as priest and bishop constantly teaching his people Eucharistic devotion, the love for the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. At the end of his life, in 1940, he asked to be buried as near to the Tabernacle as possible in his cathedral: "so that my

bones, after death, as my tongue and my pen in life, are saying to those who pass: there is Jesus! There He is! Do not leave Him abandoned!"

Let's not pass Jesus and ignore Him. Let's make a habit of coming in to church as often as possible; let's make use of this precious weekend of the Forty Hours' Adoration to sit with the Lord, to reach out to Him in love, placing before Him all that we worry about and all that we need. When we truly recognise Jesus here in the Mass and in the Tabernacle, then we will never want to leave Him or neglect Him. We will want that spiritual healing and His loving gaze to give us peace. Please return to church tomorrow/today at some point, if you are at all able, and let this parish's worship of Jesus in the Holy Sacrament rise up as a powerful tide of prayer to our Saviour. All too many people simply ignore Jesus who is here; let's not be amongst them. Let's be devout like that sick woman in the Gospel, reach out to Him, and show Him right here how much we love and adore Him. "My daughter ... My son," says Jesus, "your faith has saved you ..."