

(B13) SUNDAY 13 OF THE YEAR

(JUNE 27TH, 2021)

Readings: *Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24; Ps. 29(30):1, 3 – 5, 11 – 13; 2 Corinthians 8: 7 – 15; Mark 5:21 – 43.*

Today's Gospel Reading continues Mark's sequence of mighty works performed by Jesus.

On *the other side* of the Sea of Galilee he has freed a Gentile from evil spirits, as he had earlier freed a Jewish man in the Capernaum synagogue [Mark 1: 21 – 28].

(As with the readings from Matthew & Luke in the other two years, the Sunday lectionary omits the account of the expulsion of evil spirits [5:1 – 20]. I wonder why.)

Now Jesus re-crosses the Sea to Jewish Galilee, and here he performs two more mighty acts.

In each of them Jesus confronts both the power of death and the barriers to human contact imposed by Jewish law and traditions. First, he is approached by Jairus, one of the presidents of the local synagogue, begging for help for his young daughter, who is dying. This reminds us that not all Jewish leaders were hostile to Jesus.

Among the crowd accompanying Jesus as he set off for the house of Jairus was a woman, who was also near death. She had suffered from bleeding for twelve years, which made her "unclean" under Jewish law, and, having *spent all she had*, she was no better, *in fact she was getting worse*. Her deep need overcame the rules forbidding a woman – especially one who was "unclean" – from touching a man, and her trust in Jesus led her to touch his cloak. She was immediately healed. But even more striking than her action is the response of Jesus: he recognized that *power had gone out from him*, and, in a fourfold address brings the woman back from her living death. First, he calls her *My daughter*, recognizing her as one who *does the will of God*, and so is a member of the family of Jesus [Mark 3: 35]. Then he says *your faith has saved you* – trust, healing and salvation are linked. He tells her to *go in peace* – the Hebrew word *shalom* means, not just freedom from trouble, but wholeness of life. And, lastly, he shows his power over her future life by commanding *be free from your complaint*.

At this point, *while he was still speaking*, the earlier story is resumed: Jairus is told *Your daughter is dead*. The response of Jesus is to encourage him to be like the woman who has just been healed: *Do not be afraid; only have faith*.

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They go to the house of Jairus, and, again confronting both Jewish tradition and the power of death, Jesus takes the child by the hand and commands her to *get up* – the word is the same as the one used of the resurrection of the dead [Mark 12: 26] and of the resurrection of Jesus [16:6].

So, both of these acts are proclamations of the life-giving power of Jesus.

Today's psalm – with its refrain **I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me** – is a suitable act of thanksgiving for that power at work in our own lives.