

Pentecost V

We heard in this morning's Gospel reading from St. Mark two stories of healing. The first, a woman has been having serious physical problems that no one had been able to heal. She had heard about Jesus and thought, "Well, maybe if I just touch him, I will be healed" and she was. And then Jesus had earlier been asked by one of the leaders of a crowd of folks to heal his daughter. As it turns out the young girl had died. Jesus said to the dad, "Do not be afraid" and our Lord goes to the man's house, and says to those around him, "She is only sleeping." The folks laugh at him as though he does not know what he is saying. Jesus goes into the room and in a few minutes the girl is alive and well.

Two moments that for some can seem really strange, but there is one constant in both of those stories. It is the presence of Jesus. One, just a woman touching Jesus and the other: Jesus offering some words of strength and healing. What this story is saying to us is that the presence of Jesus provided strengthening, healing and new life to those he encountered during his ministry among us. So what might we learn from these stories?

I believe what we are to learn is that you and I, as the ambassadors of Jesus, are called to be his arms and words of healing to those we encounter in our daily lives. It is not an easy task and can be seen as an awesome burden. I am not sure I can handle that call upon my life--when one thinks, "I have the responsibility to respond as our Lord did to those whom he encountered in his daily life." And yet, that is our responsibility and an opportunity to witness to the significance Jesus has upon us as individuals.

We are not our Lord, but in His name and trusting in His strength we are called to encounter those who may be hurting, or fearful, despondent or grieving. Our Lord does not ask us to have perfect answers and solutions to the numerous issues that impact those whom we encounter. What Jesus does call forth from us is to visit those who are sick and fearful. To hold those who are grieving and perhaps shed our tears with theirs. To assist those who may be homeless or for various reasons are experiencing financial stress. And Jesus also exhorts us to rejoice with those who are enjoying special moments in their lives or have

achieved some difficult tasks because of their fortitude and will in making those moments a reality.

The ultimate learning for us as followers of Jesus, is the willingness to be present to those we encounter. We do not have to preach Jesus; our willing and constant presence to be of value to the one before us at a given time is witness in itself. May God give us the strength and the will to be such a person.

Amen