

### Connecting the Dots to Deeper Truths

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

The Gospels sometimes appear as a collection of disconnected stories, but often they form an integrated narrative that instills profound truths. As human beings, our understanding is limited, and we may struggle to discern the deeper meanings Jesus conveys. The Gospel for this week, the Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, exemplifies this integration, weaving together the stories of Jairus's daughter and the woman suffering from hemorrhages into a unified theme. At first glance, these miracles seem straightforward, but a closer look reveals a tapestry of faith, healing, and transformation that challenges the cultural norms of that day.

Central to both stories is the theme of healing through faith. Jairus, a synagogue leader, comes to Jesus with a desperate plea to save his dying daughter. His faith is evident as he falls at Jesus's feet, believing that Jesus can heal her. Similarly, the woman suffering from hemorrhages for years reaches out in faith, convinced that touching Jesus's garment will cure her. Despite the different circumstances, both are healed through their faith in Jesus, highlighting a universal truth: faith in Christ brings about profound healing and restoration.

The story of the hemorrhaging woman addresses the issue of social exclusion. According to Levitical law, her condition made her "unclean," rendering her an outcast. Her act of touching Jesus's garment was a bold transgression of these laws. Yet, instead of rebuking her, Jesus acknowledges her faith and declares her healed. It is a wonderful moment when he calls her "daughter"—a term describing a beloved member of the family. This encounter not only restores her physical health but also reintegrates her into the community. Her faith, expressed through a simple touch, breaks these barriers, illustrating the inclusive nature of Jesus's ministry.

In contrast, Jairus is an insider, a respected synagogue leader. His faith in Jesus stands out as he approaches Jesus for help, disregarding potential backlash from his peers. When Jesus reaches Jairus's home, the daughter has died and is considered "unclean," again according to Levitical law. Yet, Jesus defies these cultural norms by touching her and raising her from the dead. This act of raising Jairus's daughter from death to life signifies a transformation from impurity to purity, from despair to hope. Thus, Jesus's intervention transcends the boundaries of traditional rituals, laws, and prescriptions that Jews had followed for centuries, emphasizing instead that faith and divine power surpass human laws. Through these intertwined stories, the Gospel of Mark reveals how Jesus challenges and transforms cultural rules. The healing of both the hemorrhaging woman and Jairus's daughter demonstrates that in the kingdom of God, faith overrides social and ritual barriers. Jesus's ministry redefines purity, not as adherence to laws but as faith in God's redemptive power. These miracles serve as a powerful reminder that Jesus came to heal, restore, and include all, regardless of their social or religious standing.

*"These two stories of healing invite us to go beyond a purely horizontal and materialistic vision of life. We ask God to heal so many problems, our practical needs, and this is right, but what we must ask him for insistently is an ever firmer faith, so that the Lord may renew our life, as well as firm trust in his love, in his Providence that never abandons us."—Pope Benedict XVI*

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Rudy