

# Pastor's Letter

June 28, 2009

Dear parishioner,

In this Sunday's Gospel we see once more the more complex and enigmatic aspect of every religion: the faith.

Do you remember last Sunday's Gospel and the reaction of the disciples when faced with danger? "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

The disciples shouted in panic, during the sudden storm in the lake. And Jesus, after having ordered to the wind to stop, answered: "...have you still no faith?"

Likewise, this Sunday's Gospel by St. Mark introduces us to two persons needing help: a man desperate because his daughter is close to dying, and a woman suffering from years of illness.

The social difference between the two persons is enormous; there is however an aspect that unites them, that is, the faith.

The first one is Jairus, head of the Synagogue who can go freely to Jesus and beg Him to prevent the death of his daughter.

The second is a woman who for twelve years is sick from hemorrhaging. It is one of those illnesses that, in the Jewish culture was a sign of impurity and therefore cause to be outlawed. In the eyes of all people God condemned the woman. She could not touch anybody and nobody could touch her, for fear of contamination.

Jesus does not see any difference between the two. To Him both have equal value because both display the only thing that counts, the faith.

Jesus said to the woman: "Daughter, your faith has made you well..." and to the man: "...Do not fear, only believe."

Faith gives us the courage that we may have never had; faith allows us to realize the dreams that are hidden in our hearts and if they are let out with enthusiasm, they can totally change our life.

Of the two miracles brought to us through the Gospel, I would like to talk about the miracle concerning the woman. Why is that, you may wonder? Unfortunately this miracle reflects a reality, which today like then, afflicts many people.

What strikes me is her courage. She breaks the rules and she succeeds in doing what it was forbidden: to touch Jesus. It is very dangerous but she does it, because she is a woman who wants to live.

The other interesting feature about this woman is her belief in being able to

recover, to rebel and not succumb to her bad social condition.

Jesus tells her: "...your faith has made you well..." that is, it is for your courage, for your belief that you win over the disappointments and the humiliations that you have had to face during your lifetime.

In other words, Jesus rewards her because she has given trust to the life present in her, not to the laws invented by people full of superstitions and prejudices.

Finally and perhaps for the first time, this woman finds acceptance, a welcoming. Jesus asks her to go next to Him, not to be afraid anymore because her faith has saved her. Her faith has given her the strength to realize the dream that was confined within her for many years. Her faith has allowed her to win the battle of her life.

In the actual world it is very difficult to find situations of this kind, as illustrated by the Gospel. One in which a human being is forced to live away from society because of illness.

It is very difficult but unfortunately, in some parts of our world, it still happens today, a human being can feel and is excluded by society because of a physical handicap.

It is difficult but unfortunately, in our so-called emancipated and mature society, it happens that we see people who don't feel nor are considered peers by others, just because they belong to another social class or to another ethnic group.

It still happens today, we see people abused or humiliated, simply because their idea is not the same as ours.

You see, this last point, even if brief and apparently of little importance, has the same consequences as for the ill woman in today's Gospel.

When we meet people, who for different reasons don't have the same idea as we do, we tend to exclude them from our world. We have the tendency to consider them different and therefore not worthy of our respect.

In today's Gospel, Jesus invites two people to have faith in Him.

But how much simpler would it be for all of us had we more faith, so as to be close collaborators of Jesus in His battle against prejudices, egoism and the wickedness of man, and try to build a society that doesn't stop at a person's appearance but looks deep into the heart of us, toward God.

Peace, Father Luciano

P.S. In the months of July and August the pastoral letter will not be published.

