

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 1, 2018

About 40 years ago, on a Sunday morning just like this I had just finished a Mass at our parish church in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. A bunch of kids came running up to me and said that their friend had just died. Come quick! I ran after them and there in this very modest home was a boy about 12 years old, lying on a cot. He was dead. I held his hand; his arms were still limp and warm. They said he had choked on something.

I very clearly remember that at that moment, as I knelt next to the boy, I thought of today's gospel, how Jesus took the hand of the little girl and raised her from the dead. Oh, how I wished I could say, little boy, I say to you, arise.

It's all about healing. It's all about resurrection, new life and redemption. Just like that little girl in the gospel today, we need to be touched by the healing hand of Christ. He says to you, arise. Be re-created and live like you've never lived before.

Can you imagine what it was like for that woman in the gospel who suffered for 12 years with some sort of hemorrhage? It says she had suffered greatly and spent all that she had on trying to be cured. Then Jesus came by and she thought if only I touch the hem of his garment I will be healed.

So it is with you.

St. Augustine says, "If you are in good health you are at liberty to think of other things; but if the malaise you feel leaves you no doubt about the seriousness of your state, first you must care about your health." (Sermon by St. Augustine on Ps 102)

The plain fact is that even those in the very best of health need to be healed. This Fourth of July weekend lends itself to personal regeneration, personal healing as it were. As we celebrate independence and freedom, take time to reflect and savor the life that is within you. Give thanks for your own personal health and the strength and abilities that are given to you by God.

Recognize that the action of God within you is very dynamic and ongoing. At this very moment God is healing you both in body and soul, invigorating your spirit and renewing your body. Healing is from God. It is God's way of continuing his act of creation. May these lazy days of summer help you to come to new strength and hope. May you be encouraged by the realization that God turns to you, not another, in the crowd as you touch the hem of his garment.

May the sacrament that you receive and the word of God that you here at this mass serve to renew your inner life and excite your spirit. As you go into the coming week may you be reenergized and may your wounds be healed.

The heavy burdens that we often carry are made less by the knowledge that our Lord is with us. He gets out of the boat and a large crowd is around him and just like Jairus, the synagogue official, we step out of the crowd and come to Jesus. Please, come and lay your hands on my daughter, lay your hands on me, on my family. Heal me.

I'd like to share a prayer with you. It is the first prayer that my mother taught me. God bless me, make a good boy of me, and keep me well.