

Rev. Donato Infante III
July 1, 2018

In today's Gospel passage, we read about two healings. There are some similarities in them. Both were people who approached Jesus as an act of desperation. This woman has been sick for twelve years, "unclean", and isolated from the community. This man is told not to bother the teacher because his daughter is now dead. Think of the darkness. It looks hopeless, but faith in Christ teaches it is never hopeless. No matter how dark it gets, he remains the Light. That does not mean he always acts as we expect, as if our human reasoning is the criteria for how God should act. It does mean that in faith we know he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

This woman teaches us how we are to approach our Lord in faith: in fear and trembling because he is God. We must remember that Christ is the same God who said in the Old Testament, "take off your shoes. You are on holy ground." Yes, we approach our Lord and touch him in the sacraments often, but do we understand who we touch and come reverently, or is it something casual?

Isn't it amazing that no one noticed who touched Jesus? Jesus wouldn't have seen, as she approached him from behind, but how did no one else see this sick woman? She was invisible to them. She was forgotten. Do we see those around us in need and lead them to Jesus, the source of mercy and love? Or do we ignore them? Do we do what happened in the passage to the father in need and tell him not to bother the teacher, that there is nothing that can be done? It might be the case that we cannot do anything except listen and be present and to show that this person is not ignored or forgotten. We show the face of Christ. How is it that some people, spending five minutes with someone, can make it feel as if they were present for much longer, and others, spending an hour with them, feel they barely saw the other? By being present. I have just returned from Haiti with our teens, visiting young people in an orphanage. They do not need great works from our teens. They need a presence, a presence that reveals to them that God is present through us, a God who loves them.

Lastly, many times people must feel like the community around Jesus said, "Do not bother the teacher. There is nothing that can be done." In fact, how many times do people say they feel like the Church, the community around Jesus today, is a community full of rules that excludes people? In fact, Christ excludes no one. We see that time and again he looks at those who comes to him and welcomes all. Yes, he does calls all of us to conversion, but that means that within a community, it is never "those of us who don't struggle with that particular sin" and "those people over there who do struggle with it." No, it is a community of people, all trying to follow Christ. Yes, sometimes people have made horrible mistakes that place the person in a difficult situation, something that calls for much conversion. Christ, the light shining in the darkness, wants us to look at our lives the way he sees them, to conform our life to him. That is possible for all people by his grace. It might not be a change that happens overnight, and the process may lead to some great personal sacrifices, but the Church family is present to you, supporting you, helping you.

Therefore, I conclude with two challenges and an invitation: if we, the community, find ourselves on the inside often looking at those on the margins as somehow less than we are, we must experience a conversion as to how we see people. We must not prevent them from coming to Christ because their sins are different from ours. If we find ourselves on the margins, my invitation is to come to Christ, to come back to him. In faith seek him, and let him work in your life. You are welcomed by him. And to all of us, let us examine our lives once anew and ask ourselves if we have faith that motivates us to conform ourselves to Christ, and finding that guidance and strength we need in the confessional. May God bless you.