

Homily: 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary time: Cycle B: 2015: Wis 1: 13-15; 2: 23-24; Ps 30; 2  
Corth 8: 7, 9,, 13-15; Mk 5: 21-43  
“God’s Healing”

1. For me one of the most powerful passages in all of Scripture is read today. It has always touched my heart and spirit deeply. The woman suffering from hemorrhages who is healed by Jesus in the Gospel today serves as a model for us human beings of how we are to seek the Lord’s healing in whatever area of our lives we need it in: be it physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual. God is the Divine physician who often works through human agencies: doctors, nurses, counselors, etc. (story about guy on the roof praying to God who drowned because he refused to get in the boat or the helicopter because he was waiting for God to directly rescue him – the lesson: we need to both pray and make use of the human gifts God gives us to help us. Ultimately it is God who is always the healer, and sometimes in all honesty the natural remedies don’t work as is noted today in the Gospel, as it says this woman had been to doctor after doctor and had only gotten worse. At that point she needed a physical miracle and turned to Jesus who healed her because of her great faith in Him. We shouldn’t turn to Jesus as a last resort, but along with seeking natural remedies should at the same time beseech for God’s healing in our lives: in fact that needs to be the foundation of everything we do. He sometimes works miracles on the physical, moral, and spiritual levels of our lives. **Why doesn’t God always work a miracle when we need one?** Well, the saints tell us God will only work a miracle if it is for our eternal well being. He is looking out for our long term best interests. **A miracle is brought about if it will help us spiritually;** if it would lead to pride or complacency or presumption it won’t be brought about by our loving Lord. The miracles we usually desire are **physical** healings, which do occur sometimes. But even more powerful are **moral** and **spiritual** miracles: **moral miracles** when people are set free from serious habits of sin that they have been enmeshed in for years or decades, e.g., people who turn away from the homosexual lifestyle and are set free from that enslavement, or **spiritual miracles** in which God reveals Himself to people in a definitive way, in a moment of visitation, in which the

person now comes to see in a way they never saw before the reality of God, and are given the strength to put Him at the center of their lives, and to make the Catholic Faith in all its varied dimensions the treasure of their hearts which they now want to permeate every aspect of their existence. **Do we pray for these miracles in our lives and for others as well?** Do we seek out Jesus like the woman in the Gospel? Every time we receive Holy Communion we should ask Him for a special grace of healing for ourselves or someone else. We are literally reaching out and touching Him. **The same thing when we go to the Sacrament of Healing and Forgiveness: namely Confession.** Do we ask Him for a special grace of healing in some area of weakness and sin? See near-death experiences.

2. What if we pray for a miracle and it seems to go unanswered, and we continue to suffer? Does God not care? NO! He cares so much that He is forming us into the image of His Son, each day if we let Him through His grace and the power of the Holy Spirit. **Mysteriously sometimes God does not take away our suffering, be it physical, emotional, psychological or spiritual because He sees if we bear it in union with Christ, we will be purified and matured and like the branch on the vine pruned so we can bear more spiritual fruit.** Suffering helps us to focus on the things of eternity: if we look at the Crucifix and unite it with Jesus and don't turn in on ourselves, which is always a serious temptation when we are suffering on any level. **Suffering does make or break us as human beings.** God permits it because of his respect for our free will and He wants to bring a greater good from it. Suffering often is the only thing that wakes us up spiritually to the reality of God. This may be the reason why, with exceptions of course, why when things are going well in our lives, especially when we are young and healthy, that we tend to forget God and the things of Faith. Remember Jesus mysteriously did not take away human suffering when He died and rose for us, but **transformed** it. He makes it the material of holiness - if we have Faith in Him and bear it in love in union with Him, for the good of our souls and offer it for the conversion of others. **In relation to our neighbor: some souls are only won for God by others being willing to suffer for their conversion in love.** Archbishop Fulton

Sheen said once the greatest tragedy in life was wasted suffering, by not realizing how much good it can do for souls, our own and others - if united in love with Christ. So while we pray for miracles in our lives, we need to also pray for a greater love for the Cross and for a deeper understanding of the redemptive meaning of suffering.

3. Finally the lesson this dear suffering lady in the Gospel teaches us is to have **confidence in God's healing power** and to **abandon ourselves to His providential care**. He cares for each and every one of us more than we can ever imagine. His love for us is so great that if you or I were the only person on the face of the earth, He would have come down to save us. Do we struggle to see His love for us in the midst of all the evils, challenges, difficulties, struggles and sufferings of life? Of course! Every single one of us struggles with that reality. He knows that. But all He asks is that daily we trust Him, and abandon ourselves to His care for us, to **let go** of the need to have control over everything in our lives. **Suffering teaches us that we don't have ultimate control:** an essential **spiritual lesson**. God wants us to know in the depths of our being that He will not lead us astray or try us beyond our strength - if we have confidence in His power to heal and save us from anything, but if only we let Him work. May He reveal to us more and more each day in the depths of our hearts, what He said to this woman today, *"Your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction."* And pray our nation someday soon sees that in relation to God's teachings on marriage and family life - before it is too late. God bless you.

#### **Recommended Reading and Retreats:**

**"On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering."** Apostolic Letter. Pope John Paul II. Pauline Books and Media. Boston, MA. 1994. [www.pauline.org](http://www.pauline.org) or [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

**Retreats** on this topic: In September, from Friday September 11 until Sunday September 13, I will be doing a retreat on "The Stages of Growth in the Catholic Spiritual Life". I will also be doing a retreat in November of this year from Friday November 13 until Sunday November 15 on the very topic of this homily in much more depth: "the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering". If you are interested in either please e-mail me: [ricopadre@hotmail.com](mailto:ricopadre@hotmail.com). God bless you.