

Wounded Healer St. Mark 5:21-43

It is disconcerting, but often life's significant moments confront us as interruptions. You make plans, you have your agenda, you've lined-up all of your ducks and then disruption strikes. You discover the thing that demands your attention, is more valuable than what you are doing.

There is an adage that states: Ministers are not proficient at time management. Sometimes, this true. Like any profession, interruptions happen and we become distracted. Our Gospel lesson for today is about a woman whose need is an intrusion.

Jesus is on His way to make (vv. 21-24) a house call in the home of an impressive spiritual leader, whose daughter is ill. After our lesson's intrusion, St. Mark continues the story of the ailing daughter. (vv. 35-43). Jesus is going to perform a good deed for this father and his daughter, but He is sidetracked.

From the sidelines, a woman appears. She interrupts from the boundaries where most women find themselves. They have no roles in "the game of life." They hold tight to whatever they can of history, but they are not a part of it. Their names are never be placed on Life's marquee.

And yet, this woman pushes to be recognized. She is a wall in Jesus' way. We'll never know her name or her family of origin. The only thing we know is that her physical body is in jeopardy, and she lives in constant pain.

It has been a dozen years that her body has bled. I am not a physician or mathematician, but that is a humongous amount of blood, and we know life is in the blood. We discover that her doctors aren't much help: days wasted in the waiting-room and the ER. And, Oh Vey, the paper work!

Her body has been tested, prodded, mortified; her dignity and honor were stripped from her long ago, and she suffers still. Now she is almost hopeless. No hope save Jesus. Almost with her last ounce of strength she moves from the margins toward power.

Can you picture her blood-drained hand reaching out to touch Jesus? Does it remind you of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, and Michelangelo's fresco of the creation of Adam? The touch of God always produces life. Here this woman reverses the process. She reaches out to God in Jesus, toward life. Her self-talk? "If I can only touch Jesus' clothes I will be healed."

What incredible faith! It is an almost unbelievable image. In spite of her impossible circumstances, she pushes forward and finds life. Jesus speaks, but we cannot know what His mindset is. Is he upset, compassionate, anxious, or does He simply want to know who wanted His blessing?

Apparently, His disciples are not at all interested in the identity of this woman or what her name is; but Jesus is. This unidentified, bleeding, pain-filled woman, will now be known in her entirety!

This is one honest woman. We know this because, trembling, she steps up and tells Jesus her name. Risking everything, she seizes life and wholeness, in the midst of thinking she will be punished. But Jesus talks with her as a member of His family, no criticizing or scolding.

Jesus the Healer doesn't call her His patient but His daughter. This may be the first time she has ever felt honored. Perhaps, the first time she has felt a part of a family. It is her faith that has healed her. Jesus doesn't take credit for the healing.

Note He praises her action: "Your faith has made you well" Do you see that Jesus doesn't take credit for the healing? Jesus just tells her, "Go in peace." You are complete so live life in its fullness. Her outstretched hand of faith was confirmed by Jesus' touch.

St. Mark returns to the story of the father and the daughter. Life will happen there as well. Both stories illustrate ways to know Jesus.

Perhaps this may be your story, too. In my experience, there is much hemorrhaging in our lives. We often stand and watch others who are marginalized, powerless, weak, and in pain. Too easily we think, "It is hopeless, the situation just has to be accepted. It is what it IS."

Then there appears this assertive, nervy woman, breaking into our story, our settled plans, our agendas, prompting us that in Jesus, in the Family of the Trinity, here is a power that can heal any, OUR brokenness. Alleluia. Amen.