

## **THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR – B 1 July 2018**

**This week we hear two episodes in which the person's faith is strong despite the odds, and their actions lead to miraculous healing. These episodes not only underline their faith, however, but also the barriers and obstacles that arise when we try to put faith into action.**

**First, we may encounter resistance from the people around us, or from society, or because of religious restrictions, as did the woman with the hemorrhage. The religious principles said that she was unclean because of her association with bleeding; she had to avoid people because contact with her rendered them unclean as well. Her society therefore ostracized her for reasons that she had no control over. So, in order to act in faith, she had to walk into the crowds, and made the decision to touch Jesus. In our own time, an act of faith is often experienced by other people as a challenge to their beliefs and social mores.**

**Second, when we try to act in faith, we may also have to overcome our own self-doubt. Perhaps the hemorrhaging woman wondered whether her effort was worth it. Maybe she doubted whether someone like Jesus would even care about someone like her. Why would she deserve a miracle more than someone else? How often our own self-doubt interferes with our decision to take action?**

**Third, there are human presumptions that get in the way of acting with faith. The woman had tried to get help for herself for twelve years, and none of them had been able to help her. Her faulty thinking could have led her to the conclusion that there was nothing that could be done; that hers was a lost cause; Not taking any action is also a great way to avoid being disappointed.**

**The fourth obstacle to acting in faith comes through the example of Jairus– our pride. He was one of the leaders of the synagogue, a highly respected man in his community, perhaps one of the more educated people in the town. Yet he had to come to ask this itinerant preacher for help to save his daughter's life; he couldn't do it himself. Jairus needed help, because his status, his education, and even his religiosity were not enough to save his daughter.**

**Faith moves to action when we accept that we cannot do it ourselves.**

**When there is no faith, we can find ourselves caught up in fear, trapped in hopelessness, and perhaps even engaged in thoughts and actions that are harmful and self-destructive. I think that faith can move to action more easily when we're not isolated, when we're not trying to do it all by ourselves.**

**When we are moved by faith, it leads to healing and engagement in the real meaning of life, as the Book of Wisdom reminds us – to know that we're not trapped or overpowered by evil and death. Instead, we remember that we're created in God's image – who is immortal, or what we call everlasting life.**

**To be moved by faith, like the woman and like Jairus, we also have to step over the obstacles – resistance from others; self-doubt; faulty thinking; avoiding disappointment; pride; and trying to do it on our own. To act in faith leads us to everlasting life**