

“There was a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years. She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had.” For this Jewish woman to have bled for 12 years meant that she was ritually unclean. Physically, the life had drained from her. Communally, she would have been ostracized. The woman had lost faith in doctors, but her faith was rock solid that if she could only touch Jesus, she would be healed. Jesus not only stopped the bleeding; he made her clean and whole and part of the community again. In Christian language, we can say she was born again. It is clear Jesus offered her salvation.

I am reminded of a woman whose faith had become quite lukewarm. She suffered from an illness and sought out the best medical help possible. She pinned her hopes on a surgery but found that she was no better off. She still continued to suffer greatly. When we are at a low point, sometimes we are more receptive to God’s healing touch. The woman of means attended a healing Mass where she received the anointing of the sick with the laying on of hands. The Divine Physician healed what doctors could not. God helped not only with a physical cure but with a spiritual one as well. Thankful for restored health on two fronts, the woman’s faith came alive again and she helped those less fortunate in whatever ways she could.

Jairus was the president of the synagogue, it’s highest officer. Religiously speaking he was a man of power, but completely helpless in the case of his daughter’s illness. Pharisees and scribes often found fault with Jesus. Not so with Jairus. He is a man of faith who believes that Jesus can not only heal his daughter but offer her salvation.ⁱ “My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay your hands on her that she may get well and live” (Mk 5:23). In the early church when Mark wrote his Gospel, to fall asleep meant to die apart from Christ. Jairus, the president of the synagogue, wants her to rise with Christ to new and eternal life.

Some years ago, a man was near death in the hospital with a failing heart. He asked for a priest to come see him and to lay hands on him. He was anointed and shortly thereafter departed on a medivac flight to the big city. In midflight, his heart stopped again despite the medication he had received to keep it going. He was a man of deep faith and truly believed the laying on of hands is what allowed him to rise and live. In the course of his life, he had suffered much physical trauma. But faith in God sustained him. The Divine Physician, through the sacraments of the church, helped him until doctors could repair the damage to his heart. God helped not simply with a physical cure but also with a renewed and strengthened faith. Thankful for a stronger heart and faith, this man too showed his appreciation by helping others with their crosses in life.

Our lives are very fragile. Imbued with an immortal soul, we nevertheless live with very finite bodies. During the pandemic, with the severe limitations to travel and social interaction, we have recognized the importance of communication, of physical contact, of helping one another. In our Gospel, Jesus lays hands on the little girl to save her. Through touch the woman of great faith receives the salvation she needs. Be Christ for one another. Reach out to others to listen to their concerns, to share your hopes and dreams, to offer a caring word and a kind smile:

“May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us.” — Teresa of Ávilaⁱⁱ

We cannot do it alone. We need Jesus, the Divine Physician to heal us, to save us, and to make us whole. Believe. Have faith ... so that Jesus may turn to you on the day of judgement

and say to you: “Son or Daughter, your faith has saved you ... Talitha koum ... I say to you, arise!”

ⁱ LaVerdiere, Eugene. The Beginning of the Gospel of Mark, 132-141.

ⁱⁱ [Goodreads.com/author/quotes/74226.Teresa_of_vila](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/74226.Teresa_of_vila)