

Powerful Prayer from My Perspective
Richard Kramer

Praying before the Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance is truly both a special gift and a special calling, or responsibility. So, I thought I'd share how prayer works, at least for me.

In the earliest gospel written, Mark's, the first miracle individually reported is presented in chapter five. Let me tell it this way: Jesus has been requested to help the daughter of Jairus (of the local synagogue) who apparently is dying. Jesus is on his way, and the crowd is following him, which apparently has become common. Obviously, Jesus is aware of the status of the girl and is focusing on the situation—preparing for it in prayer as he's walking. Streets are narrow, the crowd is pushing. Suddenly he stops, calling out, "Who Touched Me??" Okay, you know the story, but bear with me...

Jesus has stopped, is searching the crowd. "WHO TOUCHED ME??" He is almost pleading as he turns and searches the crowd. We have no idea how long this went on, but I figure at least a couple of minutes, and a woman comes forward and falls on the ground and tells her story. Mark records Jesus as saying, "Daughter, it is your faith that has cured you. Go in peace." (And, yes, Jesus goes on to cure Jairus' daughter, apparently raising her from the dead, or at least a coma.)

But let's take another look at the woman with the hemorrhage, a closer look at what happened. Was Jesus angry? No. I think Jesus was surprised, and not just surprised, but thrilled, at least by the end of the woman's story. Why would he be thrilled? What happened there? She touched his cloak. So?

As a kid I rubbed balloons on my head to stick them to a wall. We grew up understanding static electricity. How many times have you experienced a static electric shock, you know, like when you touch a switch, or accidentally hit a contact point and get zapped? You know the feeling. Science tells us that the electric charge from the contact gets transferred to you, or me, and we get a jolt. How does this relate here? Well, they didn't have electric current when Jesus walked the earth, but he's reacting like there was a shock, a transfer of energy, or power (which he was probably consolidating to help the young girl)—and for the first time in Jesus' experience, someone tapped into his power and took some of it! Unlikely? Well, why not? To me it means both the woman and Jesus, "are on the same page" or "are tuned into each other" or "on the same wavelength." We use terms like these commonly today which weren't available at the time of Jesus.

I think that Jesus was very excited that someone was on the same wavelength that he was, that someone was able to tap into his power. He was excited because someone believed, and plugged into him. And he and she got zapped. Of course, he was thrilled! He realized that here was evidence that others would learn and do what he was doing. Is this idea impossible?

I think not. There are too many incidents reported (and/or recorded) in the bible which we call miracles because there is no known explanation. Jesus is one of the people in the Bible who has a preponderance of stories about "doing the miraculous." If it is a skill, how does he come by it? Jesus suggests that it can be learned.

Looking at the gospel stories, we are consistently and repeatedly told that "Jesus went into the hills to pray, to be apart." Jesus was going apart to listen to God, to restore himself, to recharge, to learn where he needed to travel next, to commune with God.

(We don't know how miracles happen, but I've asked myself the question, "Would God disregard the natural order, the "laws of physics" that manage everything around us?" I don't think the laws are disregarded. However, I don't think we know the extent of the "laws of physics" enough that we can rule out variations that can be utilized. Theoretical physics now has started to postulate "miraculous concepts." But more of that another time.)

Jesus is praying (a) to be filled with the energy he needs to do his work; (b) to understand where he is to go to do the will of the Father; (c) to understand how God sees the world, especially when compared to

the governing establishment of the times. He is listening to God, communing with God. He is quiet with God.

We also know that this is what Jesus was actively teaching those following him. Again, in Mark Chap. 9, the Apostles are “helping Jesus” with healing (sounds like a walk-in clinic) and the apostles can’t help a young boy. They have to bring the boy to the “consultant” (Jesus), who cures the boy. Jesus later basically tells the apostles they weren’t ready for this one yet. More training is needed.

So, where does that leave us?

(1) Prayer is powerful. Prayer is power.

(2) People—WE—can learn to do this.

(3) Successful prayer requires that you be linked to God the Father. (Jesus and the Father are one. Jesus is in the Eucharist. I need to link to the Eucharist.) It means that I have to change my concept (vision) of things and see with God’s eyes. It means I have to experience creation the way God experiences creation. It means that “the blinders” that were on the people in Israel at the time of Jesus are still upsetting the vision of the people in the world today.

(4) Jesus consistently said, “take up your cross and follow me.” I have to take up my cross. I have to see as Jesus sees, listen as He listens, do as He does, love as He loves, offer my obedience to God as Jesus offers His obedience.

So, if you want to be part of miracles, consider getting on the same page with God. That means the action of God—miracles—is supposed to be ordinary in our lives. We need to learn to recognize them.

Please know that this is a plug to get more members for our Community At Prayer ministry in our parish. I’d like to try to get together with you and talk about it. Blessings. Dick Kramer