

January 31, 2023



Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

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KEEPING OUR EYES FIXED ON JESUS

By Father David C. Robinson, SJ

Excerpts from Today's Readings

Brothers and sisters: Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith.

HEBREWS 12:1- 2

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. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. She said, "If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured." Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. Jesus, aware at once

that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who has touched my clothes?” But his disciples said to him, “You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you ask, who touched me?” And he looked around to see who had done it. The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.”

MARK 5:25-34

Reflection

Throughout the gospels, the healing ministry of Jesus takes a high profile. These touching moments of compassion highlight the ways in which the divine love at the heart of Jesus’ mission in the world could work wonders in the lives of ordinary people in extraordinary ways. Through the centuries, myriad conversations have focused on the source and nature of these ‘miracles.’ The danger of such conversations is that they can become the basis of magical thinking, thereby supplanting the deeper significance of the events themselves. The emphasis shifts to the belief, prayer, perseverance, or virtue that might lie at the root of these healings. The danger of this transactional mindset helps to clarify why Jesus so often admonishes those whom he heals to avoid any sensational publicity that would substitute the event for the grace of the love of God.

The letter to the Hebrews highlights the essential need for “**keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith.**” If our faith is grounded in ‘blessings and miracles’ received, we are simply placing our hope in ‘reward’ rather than the life-sustaining presence of the One who is the true center of our religious belief, our faith, and our communal identity.

The woman with the hemorrhage comes to him with a compelling faith in Jesus as a profound manifestation of God’s love and intentions for all people. She does not merely present herself as one who believes and therefore deserves healing. Jesus recognizes the power of that faith when he asks, “Who has touched my clothes?” He affirms her with the words, “Daughter, your faith has saved you.” He doesn’t equate her healing with her faith. Instead, he recognizes that her faithful heart has opened her to the true miracle of God’s love, which is a saving grace available to all, not only to those who ‘earn’ a ‘reward.’ Healing is not a *quid pro quo* for belief. If we ‘keep our eyes fixed on Jesus,’ our eyes and hearts are opened to the endless fount of blessing we are offered. Our healing is more than an act, it is a transformation of vision that brings us to a rebirth of the soul, a healing that is more complete and profound. That is the freedom of

faith, and the ultimate fulfillment of our journey in God.



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For Pondering

- What do you regard as a true 'healing in faith'?
- Have you experienced an event in your life that came as a blessed surprise in your walk of faith?
- What do you understand to be the essential grace of prayer for healing?

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