



Bringing Home the Word

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time | July 1, 2018

Saved by Faith Alone

By Mary Katharine Deeley

A fourth-century legend from Catholics in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire tells us the name of the woman in today's Gospel is Beronike. A woman of great faith, she knew that the law considered her unclean because she had a flow of blood and no one could touch her. When she saw Jesus, she didn't ask him to touch or even speak to her. She didn't want him to feel what she felt—outcast and isolated. She simply believed that touching his garment would bring her relief.

A couple of weeks ago, St. Paul told us that we walk by faith, not by sight. Faith was all this woman had to go on; everything else had failed. What she heard about Jesus stirred something in her soul, and she followed her convictions. She wasn't disappointed. The power of Christ, who heals us of whatever wounds us deeply, went out immediately to her who dared to hope. When he called out to see who touched him, her fear didn't keep her away. She was saved by faith alone.

Being saved doesn't always mean miraculous cures, but it does involve standing before Christ as we are—bleeding, broken, sinful—and trusting that he is our answer. We don't know for sure what happened to the woman. But her legend continued.

When Jesus carried his cross to his crucifixion, a woman stepped out to stop the flow of blood and sweat streaking his face. We know her by the Latin translation of Beronike—Veronica—which carries with it an additional meaning: "true icon," in reference to the facial image that Jesus left on her cloth. +

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Sunday Readings

Wisdom 1:13–15; 2:23–24

God formed us to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made us.

2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13–15

He became poor although he was rich, so that by his poverty you might become rich.

**Mark 5:21–43 or
5:21–24, 35b–43**

[Jesus] took the child by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise!"

A Word From Pope Francis

Countless people suffer trials and injustice, and live in anxiety. Our hearts need anointing with God's consolation, which does not take away our problems, but gives us the power to love, to peacefully bear pain. Receiving and bringing God's consolation: this mission of the Church is urgent.

—Homily in Tbilisi, Georgia,
October 1, 2016



REFLECTION QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- How can I better embrace the challenging moments in my life rather than rebel or run from them?
- How can I better accept and let go of those things that cause me pain?



The Power of the Meek

By Donald Senior, CP

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land (Matthew 5:5).

As a boy I remember seeing the ad about the “weakling” shamed by a bully who kicks beach sand in his face, then walks off with his girlfriend. Only when the weakling decides to lift weights to build muscles is he ready to bop the bully on the chin and reclaim his “prize.” The meek inherit the earth? No way!

Few of the beatitudes confront our cultural values so directly. In today’s geopolitics, the land belongs to the strong, not the meek. In the Bible, the same equation played out daily: Both sides believe that the only language their opponent understands is force.

What can Jesus mean in the third beatitude of Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount? The Greek word translated as “meek” is *praus*, and its meaning is not meekness in the sense of unassertiveness—as the English term can imply—but as powerlessness or defenselessness. When one sees tattered lines of Syrian refugees or staring eyes of starving African children, their plight is not one of being “meek” in the sense of shy or retiring, but of being without power or resources and, therefore, terribly vulnerable. By extension, the word can also move beyond the level of one’s social condition and refer to a lack of pretense or arrogance, a gentleness and authentic humility that comes from

understanding that ultimately one’s life and power depend upon God.

Biblical Vision

Jesus’ beatitude is a quotation from Psalm 37:11: “But the poor will inherit the earth, will delight in great prosperity,” and taps into a strong biblical vision. Because the Israelites were people of the land, their dreams for peace often included longing for a time when the land’s bounty would not be destroyed and all could live together peacefully.

Particularly beautiful is the vision of the future in Isaiah: “They shall build houses and live in them, they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit; They shall not build and others live there; they shall not plant and others eat. As the years of a tree, so the years of my people; and my chosen ones shall long enjoy the work of their hands” (65:21–22).

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus also envisions a kingdom of God where peace and justice abound, where God’s children have a place of security and joy. This is the powerful dream Jesus summons up early in his ministry. Blessed are the meek, the powerless, the downtrodden, because in God’s reign they will not remain disenfranchised but will inherit the land. The Gospel’s vision of a just future that reverses oppression now

extends beyond Israel to the whole earth, encompassing all those whose lives and hopes are threatened and who have no resource to lean on other than God’s providence.

Embraced by Jesus

What is remarkable in the Gospel of Matthew is that Jesus himself throws his lot with people like this. He describes himself as “meek and humble of heart” (11:29) and the evangelist cites the words of the prophet Zechariah, emphasizing the paradox of Jesus the king entering Jerusalem on a donkey. “Behold, your king comes to you, meek and riding on an ass...” (Matthew 21:5, citing Zechariah 9:9). Jesus’ mission is to identify with the least (21:35–46), to teach and heal that they might have justice, and to exemplify the virtues of gentleness and humility that the Spirit of God instills.

Without fail, Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount summons us to take stock of our values from God’s point of view. +

PRAYER

Lord, you promise eternal life to all who believe in you. Give me the courage to be an advocate for life.

From Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 2-7, 2018

Monday, Weekday:
Am 2:6–10, 13–16 / Mt 8:18–22

Tuesday, St. Thomas:
Eph 2:19–22 / Jn 20:24–29

Wednesday, Weekday:
Am 5:14–15, 21–24 / Mt 8:28–34

Thursday, Weekday:
Am 7:10–17 / Mt 9:1–8

Friday, Weekday:
Am 8:4–6, 9–12 / Mt 9:9–13

Saturday, Weekday:
Am 9:11–15 / Mt 9:14–17