

“Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” (Mt 9:22)

Jesus is walking, surrounded by a crowd; a desperate father has just begged him to come to the aid of his dying daughter. While on his way there, another encounter takes place; a woman who has been suffering from blood loss for many years makes her way through the crowd. Her serious physical condition also forces her to limit her family and social interaction. The woman does not call out to Jesus, nor speaks, but instead comes up from behind him. She dares to touch the fringe of his garment, purposely thinking: “If I could only touch his cloak, I will be healed of this suffering that torments me.”

And behold, Jesus turns, looks at her and reassures her: her faith has obtained her salvation. Not only physical health, but moreover, an encounter with God’s love, through Jesus’ gaze.

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This episode from Matthew’s Gospel opens an unexpected perspective for us too. God is always on his way toward us, but he also awaits our initiative so that we do not miss our appointment with him. Our journey of faith, although bumpy and marked by mistakes, fragility and disappointments, has immense value. God is the Lord of true Life and wants to share this life with all of us, his sons and daughters. In his eyes, we are rich with a dignity that no circumstance can suppress. For this reason, today Jesus says to us too:

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We can be helped to live this Word of Life by what Focolare founder, Chiara Lubich, wrote when meditating precisely on this Gospel passage in 1997: “In faith, men and women clearly demonstrate that they do not rely on themselves but trust in the One who is stronger than them. ...

“Jesus calls the woman he has healed ‘daughter’ to show that he really wants to give her not only the gift of physical healing but also the gift of divine life that can renew her entirely. Jesus, in fact, works miracles so that we can accept the salvation that he brings. He embodies the Father’s gift of forgiveness, and when this gift is communicated to men and women, it transforms them.

“How can we live this Word? By showing God our trust in him when we face serious challenges. This attitude certainly does not relieve us of our responsibilities, nor does it dispense us from doing all we can. ...

“Yet our faith can be put to the test. We see it clearly in this suffering woman who is able nonetheless to overcome the obstacle of the crowd that stands between her and the Master...

“We need to have faith, then, but a faith that does not doubt in the face of trials. We should show Jesus that we have understood the immense gift of divine life that he has brought us. We must be grateful to him and correspond to it.”ⁱ

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This certainty also allows us to bring about salvation by tenderly “touching” those who are suffering, in need, darkness or bewilderment.

This is what happened to a mother from Venezuela who found the courage to forgive. “I was feeling desperate for help when I attended a meeting on the Gospel where I heard Jesus’ words: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God” (see Mt 5:9), and “Love your enemies” (see Lk 6:35).

“Love your enemies. How could I forgive those who had killed my son? Yet in the meantime, a seed had entered into me and the decision to forgive finally prevailed. Now I can truly call myself a “child of God.” Recently I was called to a meeting with my son’s killer who had been caught. It was difficult, but grace intervened. There was no hatred or rancor in my heart, only great pity and the intention to entrust him to God’s mercy.”

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