

I know many of you expect me to have something to say about the Supreme Court's ruling in favor of legalizing gay marriage. I do have something to say, but I feel it would be better addressed **outside** the gospel this Sunday, because the Gospel deserves it's own privileged time of commentary and reflection.

In our gospel this evening/morning, we are privy to one of Jesus' greatest miracles, where he brings back to life the deceased daughter of Jairus, a synagogue official. Yet within this dramatic event, there is another miracle, the healing of a woman with long-term hemorrhaging. Now, if I were to poll you as to which of these miracles was greater, which would you choose? I suspect that most of you would say that the greatest of the two was Jesus' raising Jairus' daughter from the dead. And you would be correct, if you were **not** Jews from Jesus' day and time; which you are not.

But if you were a Jew during Jesus' lifetime, and a woman who suffered hemorrhages, then you were in serious trouble. In Jesus' day, having a hemorrhage, especially a chronic one, made you "unclean", unable to be a part or participate in the life of your community. In other words, you might as well be dead. Your only hope was to hide or cover-up your condition, which this woman seemed to have been able to do, at least on this occasion.

This provided her an opportunity to approach Jesus. Although she could not do so openly because of her condition, she thought to herself that if she could but “touch” Jesus’ clothes, she would be cured. And indeed she was. But look at what happened. Jesus noticed “something” had gone out of him. In other words, even an “anonymous” healing cost him something, and he felt it.

What Mark the Evangelist is telling us here, is that any act of faith on our part, does **not** go unnoticed by Jesus. He came as one of us, for us, even for those like this woman who was “dead to life.” In healing this woman with a chronic hemorrhage, Jesus restored her to full life, just as he would Jairus’ dead daughter a few moments later.

The point here is this. Whatever we may think of ourselves, our lives, our predicaments, Jesus is there for us. Can we expect him to solve every problem or difficulty we have? No. That's not the point of his mission. The point of his mission is our restoration to **full life**. And by "full life" I mean the certainty that we, through him, can participate in the fullness of life He shares with the Father and Holy Spirit; both here on earth and ultimately so with God in heaven.

The two miracles we are witness to in the gospel this evening/morning, demonstrate that Jesus is the Lord of life, as well as it's Saviour. Without Jesus, we are indeed dead. Those of us who live on this earth, have been graced to know what it is to be, to exist. While that existence at times may be challenged with difficulty and suffering, Jesus shows us that we can overcome it if our lives are united with his. The beauty is, that like the woman in our gospel, we can reach out to him in whatever way we can, and he will acknowledge us. And perhaps the greater beauty is, is that like Jairus, who comes to Jesus on the behalf of someone else, our Lord, also, does not disappoint.

Gay Marriage

Now regarding the Supreme Court's decision to legalize gay marriage throughout the U.S. First of all, this only effects civil marriages; namely the document you can get from the county courthouse, to the rights and benefits any "married" couple can now receive under a state's marital laws as well as at the federal level. For now, religious institutions, such as the Catholic Church, are exempt from performing weddings for same-sex couples, because such "unions" are in opposition to Church teaching.

And that's what they are, (unions) and that's how we should consider them. Gay marriages are **not** marriages; they are the opposite of marriage. For Catholics and for believers in the Judeo-Christian tradition; marriage is "defined" as a life-long committed relationship between a man and a woman for their benefit and the procreation and rearing of children to further God's plan and teachings for salvation. Yes, there are those couples who cannot conceive, but choose to adopt. But this is done within God's familial plan of a child having both a mother and a father. Gay marriage, from its outset, can do none of this.

This does not mean we should be antagonistic towards persons or couples of same-sex attractions. They deserve the same merciful love and forgiveness God has extended to all of us. All of us fall short of the perfect love of God and neighbor. We can all wind excuses for our behaviors, but **none** of that usurps the prescription for happiness given to us by our Creator God. While the Church is not God per se, She is God's herald for authentic Christian and human behavior, as well as the concomitant, deleterious effects and consequences, which come with acting outside the norms of God's teaching and commandments. Let us continue to pray for the Church's freedom to proclaim this message, and for open hearts to receive it.