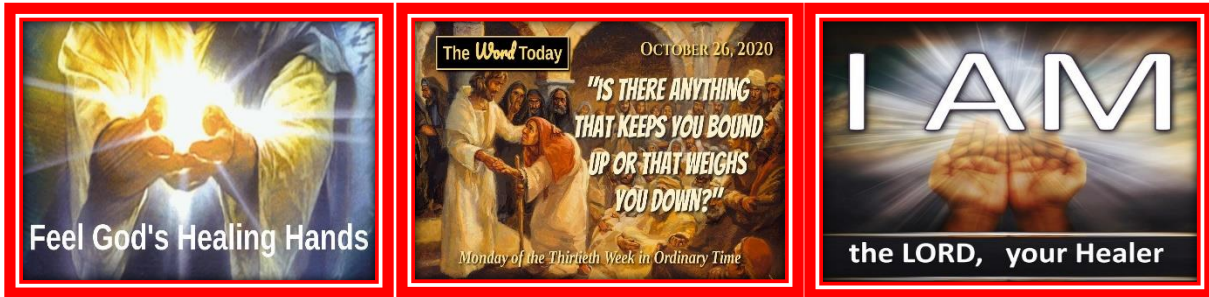


October 26, 2020 – Monday of the 30th Week in Ordinary Time



**“Responding to the invitation of the Lord of all Liberation and Wholeness to experience His Healing Touch!”
(Eph 4:32-5:8 and Lk 13:10-17)**

1. Healing of a woman – We need a "healing touch"

In the gospel reading, Jesus, the Lord of healing and restoration, encountered the woman who had been crippled for many years. She was bent. She was in pain probably. She was also very much dispirited too. Jesus saw her need. He understood her pain. By His word and His action of laying his hands on her, He enabled her to stand upright. In response, she glorified God.

We can often find ourselves bent over for one reason or another. We carry some burden which makes it difficult for us to stand upright and face the world head-on. We feel ourselves being pulled down, dragged down by a weight. In such times, **many of us are crippled and infirmed. We need healing. We need a touch of the Lord.** The Lord can reach out to us as he reached out to that woman. Sometimes he will reach out to us in and through a friend or a neighbor. At other times he may reach out to us more directly in and through prayer. The Lord works to release us from the burdens that threaten to crush us. However, for Jesus, there is no day when he cannot do his liberating and life-giving work. There is no unsuitable time for the Lord because he takes no rest from engaging in God's creative and life-giving work. We can call on the Lord and expect to experience his liberating presence any day of the week, at any time of the day or night.

2. The attitude of the Synagogue ruler and Our Attitude

The synagogue ruler objected to the woman being released from her burden on the Sabbath day. He calls the leader of the synagogue a hypocrite and draws his attention to the greater and important dimensions of life. “This daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound for eighteen years, ought she not have been set free on this Sabbath day from this bondage?” (Lk 13:16).

- The man focused on the rule of Sabbath, Jesus focused on the Law of Love and Liberation.
- The man saw the commandment violated, Jesus saw a life that had been violated and was in need of renewal.
- The man burst out in anger and pride, Jesus blossomed out in Compassion and Humanness.

Do I display any such characteristics?

- Failing to see the goodness in people and instead speak only of their faults and mistakes.
- Failing to trust in God in hard situations and instead only criticize and blame God.
- Getting wild with people for tiny faults without considering their context and circumstances.
- Spreading calumny and rumors about the unpleasant aspects of others.

A negative attitude in life can cause much damage to the people around us. It can make our life unclean and miserable and cause people to avoid us. It can make our families, our communities, and our societies to be unlivable and unpleasant. As St Paul exhorts us: "... be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God!" (Eph 4:32-5:2).

A strong decision needs to be made: to stop the usage of bad words, defamatory news, harmful statements, uncharitable remarks and to stop spitting cruel and heartless comments.

3. The response of the Synagogue leader and the Woman:

The response of the synagogue official to the woman being freed from her infirmity stands in very sharp contrast to the response of the woman herself. The gospel reading says that he was indignant at Jesus because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. **The woman's praise of God, recognizing that it was God who had worked through Jesus, stands over against the synagogue leader's indignation at Jesus.** It is clear from Jesus' very critical address to the synagogue official which of the two responses he considered the more appropriate.

The official should have joined with the woman in praising God for what Jesus had done rather than give vent to his indignation at Jesus. The gospel reading is reminding us that God's life-giving work in the world can be perceived very differently by different people. God's working in our midst through his Son can bring some people to praise God and others to indignation and great annoyance. The woman recognized God's presence because her need was great; the official was blind to it because he was too certain about what he considered to be God's will. We are more likely to recognize the ways

that God is at work in our midst when we too are aware of our need of God and our relative ignorance before the mystery of God's ways.

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, We acknowledge our need for freedom and place ourselves before You. We ask for the healing we need. Straighten us up, Lord, and unshackle our hearts from crippling attachments. Show us how we can bring Your mercy and healing love to those in need around us.

Jesus, We Trust In You