Tuesday of the Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (*Mk* 5:21-43): When Jesus had crossed again [in the boat] to the other side, a large crowd gathered around him, and he stayed close to the sea. One of the synagogue officials, named Jairus, came forward. Seeing him he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, saying, “My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay your hands on her that she may get well and live.”

He went off with him, and a large crowd followed him and pressed upon him. 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 (…). He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.”

While he was still speaking, people from the synagogue official’s house arrived and said, “Your daughter has died; why trouble the teacher any longer?” Disregarding the message that was reported, Jesus said to the synagogue official, “Do not be afraid; just have faith.” (…).

The prayer, a struggle "hand to hand” with God

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Today, we consider the prayer as a struggle of faith and a victory of perseverance. In "Genesis" (ch. 32), that mysterious "hand to hand" struggle, between Jacob and God, announces something of what we can now see in the "bleeding woman" and Jairus.

Prayer requires trust, closeness, in a symbolic "hand to hand" with God, as in the woman who was subject to bleeding: "If I can touch…". The "battle" implies strength of soul, perseverance, tenacity in reaching what we desire before a blessing Lord who remains always mysterious, who appears unattainable. And if the object of one’s desire is a relationship with God, His blessing and His love, then the battle cannot but culminate in the gift of oneself to God in the recognition of one’s own weakness, which triumphs precisely when we reach the point of surrendering ourselves into the merciful hands of God: "Your faith

has saved you".

—When nobody listens to me anymore, when I can no longer invoke anyone, when the problem seems to overflow all hopes —such was the situation with Jairus— God still listens to me and helps me.