

Thought for the week
Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Mark 5:21-43

"Do not be afraid; only have faith."

This was Jesus's remark to Jairus, the ruler of the Capernaum synagogue whose daughter had just been declared dead.

This theme is taken up in the modern hymn: "Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you". The hymn was written by Gerry Markland, a catholic school teacher from Manchester. I have come to know Gerry on a number of Harvesters Weekends for Christian Men and I recently discovered that he had been on a Mission to Tanzania. There he had been challenged by the faith of the people and their expectation for healing which was often realised in a proportion that we do not experience here.

Sickness, tragedy and death are unwelcome, sobering realities. They make us feel vulnerable, needy and even desperate. This clearly was the experience of Jairus. So desperate was he that he fell in prayer at Jesus' feet. The same homage was given by the woman who was suffering from a bleeding disorder.

At the end of the Gospel of Mark: *"the believers will lay their hands on the sick and they will be healed."* This is clearly a sign that will be with the true followers of Jesus and miracles do continue to take place. His three-year ministry was truly unique, but miracles do continue to take place.

In the Sacrament of anointing Jesus continues to touch us in order to heal us. This anointing is not just for those on their death-bed, but for everyone whose health is seriously impaired by sickness or old age. We should not be reluctant to ask for the sacrament.

"Do not be afraid"

Stephen