COLLECT: Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that each, in our vocation and ministry, may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

READINGS:

2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27

After the death of Saul, when David had returned from defeating the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag. David intoned this lamentation over Saul and his son Jonathan. (He ordered that The Song of the Bow be taught to the people of Judah; it is written in the Book of Jashar.) He said:

Your glory, O Israel, lies slain upon your high places! How the mighty have fallen!

Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon; or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult.

You mountains of Gilboa,let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor bounteous fields! For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul, anointed with oil no more. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,

the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, nor the sword of Saul return empty.

Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely! In life and in death they were not divided;

they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you with crimson, in luxury, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle!

Jonathan lies slain upon your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan, greatly beloved were you to me; your love to me was wonderful,

passing the love of women. How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

Mark 5:21-43

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the lake. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, ‘My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.’ So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, ‘If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.’ Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, ‘Who touched my clothes?’ And his disciples said to him, ‘You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, “Who touched me?”’ He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.’

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader’s house to say, ‘Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?’ But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, ‘Do not fear, only believe.’ He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, ‘Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.’ And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, ‘Talitha cum,’ which means, ‘Little girl, get up!’ And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

REFLECTION: In today’s gospel Jesus performs two miracles. Both are about faith and belief and how sometimes these are expressed in action and sometimes when no action on our part is possible, in trust.

The woman who for twelve years has suffered from haemorrhages believes Jesus could heal her but is afraid of asking or acting overtly probably out of shame (at the time her condition would class her as unclean). So perhaps in fear as well as desperation she decides to use the presence of a crowd to cover her bold move, touching the hem of Jesus’ robe - and is healed.

Jesus stops and asks who touched him, sensing power having gone out from him - for Jesus, healing is something he does by default, without his even having been verbally asked to do it!

His question is not as it might be seen today - a celebrity outraged at being touched by someone without permission.

Jesus uses the moment as a prelude to revealing the woman’s great faith, not to show her up. He praises her faith as the reason she has been healed and sends her off with the words, “ Go in peace and be healed of your disease”. Odd words considering she’s already been healed - but maybe he refers to the other

‘dis-ease’ that she and all women of the time suffered from - that of being stigmatised because of their gender (even in just having her period a woman was considered unclean) and her having touched Jesus’ robe in any event would have been seen by some to be an outrage.

The healing of Jairus’ daughter demonstrates the faith of her father, the leader of the synagogue, who, desperate, goes to Jesus and begs him to heal her. Jesus of course agrees but before they get to the house, they hear that she is dead. Jesus ignores this, telling Jairus not to fear, only believe. Jairus, now totally powerless, puts his trust in Jesus and allows him to go to the girl who is restored to life. This may sound simple, but we all know that trust is not always easy. It involves humility and courage - both often difficult because the one requires soul-searching and honesty at a deep level. And the other requires inner strength and determination plus the ability to act even though others may think us foolish or criticise or judge us.

For personal reflection:

1) The woman and Jairus both went to Jesus in need - and felt fear and desperation. When you approach God in need - either your own need or someone else’s, what do you usually feel ? Have you ever experienced the fearfulness and/or the desperation of the woman, or the father, in the gospel story? How do humility or courage figure in these things?

2) Jesus’ agenda is always to encourage faith and bring new life, -and this, not to prove anything, but simply to do the will of God. Where in your life do you find the opportunities follow Jesus’ example in encouraging faith and bringing newness of life to those you come into contact with?

Post Communion Sentence

Grant, O Lord, we beseech you, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by your governance, that your Church may joyfully serve you in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.