

SUNDAY PLUS

Help!

Jesus, help!

by Catherine Pepinster

Crowds frequently press in on Jesus in the Gospels. They want to see him, to touch him, to hear him. Even in the house of the synagogue official there is a crowd, a commotion with people weeping. We can imagine the noise and the intensity of the situation. Eventually, the crowd would turn on Jesus at the end of his life and buy for his blood. They are always wanting something.

We get a sense in this Gospel of the cost to Jesus of all these demands. As a woman touches him, Luke writes that Jesus was aware of the power going out of him. But when he asks about it, there is no anger or frustration; rather the woman's openness to him helps restore her to health.

There is a sense here of Jesus' openness to others as well. That



such a woman, with her constant bleeding, touched him would have been anathema to people at that time, who thought blood, especially a woman's, unclean. But Jesus' overturns these norms, just as he will overturn death with his encounter with the daughter of the synagogue official. There is a tenderness here: "my daughter", says Jesus to the bleeding woman; taking the dead child by the hands, he calls her "little girl".

Illness and death are the greatest fears of humanity through the generations. In this Gospel we see that Jesus can overcome both. In these two accounts, the key is faith – the faith of the bleeding woman and the faith Jesus urges the official to have. We ask for help and in return God asks for our trust.

Catherine Pepinster, a former Editor of *The Tablet*, is a regular contributor to Redemptorist Publications' *Living Word* and *Weekday Living Word*.

The real focus

by Des Kelly

Many times throughout our lives we will receive help, be it from God, our parents, doctors, nurses, priests, teachers, friends and many others.

When we are first born, we receive help from our parents who give us roots and wings to fly. As we get older, we are sometimes embarrassed to ask for help as we see it as a sign of weakness or perhaps our pride stops us. Yet, asking for help is important. We even see Jesus asking his Father for help in the Garden of Gethsemane.

In today's Gospel we see the leader of the synagogue asking Jesus to help heal his daughter who is sick. Physical illness sweeps our

lives of daily trivia and pride, leaving only the essentials. In these often-frightening moments, we discover a lot about ourselves, about others and about seeking God's help.

Des Kelly, a retired headteacher, now works to develop leadership in Catholic schools and parishes.

Jesus, help me! Be with the people I love and grant them health, happiness and safety. Comfort those who are most in need of your love. ☪ Amen.

Why wonder?

by Bridie Stringer

In today's Gospel reading two words, "my daughter", are used twice, but in entirely different contexts. In the first instance, Jairus, the distraught and anxious father begs Jesus to make a house call in order to heal his beloved twelve-year-old child. While on his way to do this, Jesus encounters someone who should have been completely unacceptable to him – a woman with a medical condition which made her both ritually unclean and socially unacceptable. This woman Jesus refers to as "my daughter" and against the odds, she is fully restored and able to re-join the community. At the house of Jairus,

again Jesus defeats the odds by restoring life to the little girl, despite the neighbours thinking it was ridiculous even to try.

As followers of Jesus in our time, what do we bring trustfully to him so that we can be made whole again in mind, body and spirit?

Bridie Stringer is a mother, grandmother and pastoral theologian.

"How beautiful is the gaze with which Jesus regards us—how full of tenderness! Let us never lose trust in the patience and mercy of God."

Pope Francis

Today: Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24
2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15
Mark 5:21-43

Monday: Genesis 18:16-33
Matthew 8:18-22

Tuesday: Acts 12:1-11
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18
Matthew 16:13-19

Wednesday: Genesis 21:5, 8-20
Matthew 8:28-34

Thursday: Genesis 22:1-19
Matthew 9:1-8

Friday: Genesis 23:1-4, 19; 24:1-8, 62-67
Matthew 9:9-13

Saturday: Ephesians 2:19-22
John 20:24-29

Next Sunday: Ezekiel 2:2-5
2 Corinthians 12:7-10
Mark 6:1-6