

**SANDWICHES**  
**13th Sunday in OT, June 27, 2021**  
**Deacon Robb Pailthorpe**

Do you like sandwiches? If so, what's your favorite? Maybe a ham and Swiss or a good old-fashioned PB&J? Maybe a regional creation like a Philly cheese steak, a west-coast Ruben or an Iowa favorite of hot, pulled pork? Maybe you have a go-to sandwich joint like Subway, Blimpie or Firehouse? Me, personally, I love a *really* good triple-decker club sandwich. Today, St. Mark serves us a sandwich... it's actually a literary or writing style that he's well-known for... some biblical scholars call it a "Markon Sandwich" where St. Mark takes one story and cuts it in half – the bread – and inserts another story – the meat -- into the center... and, like any delicious sandwich, the "good stuff" is in the middle.

Our middle, in this case, is the woman afflicted with hemorrhaging. She means to simply touch Jesus in belief of being healed. And Jesus, he feels the power go out of him and wants to know who's touched him. On the surface, this seems like a pretty straight

forward miracle but there are some, shall we say, tasty morsels in our sandwich.

Blood is considered a life force, so for years and years, this woman's life has been slowly draining away. She gone to doctor after doctor in search of a cure... spending all the money she has only to have the treatments make her condition worse. She is considered unclean... she is not allowed into the temple to worship... everything she sits upon; everyone she touches is considered unclean. Were she to marry, she could have no relations with her husband. She is an outcast... she is utterly alone. Upon hearing about the many miracles that Jesus is performing, her faith is rekindled and she says, "If I can but touch his clothes, I shall be cured." The woman takes advantage of a large crowd surrounding Jesus, touches his cloak and is instantly cured. At the same moment, Jesus feels his power go out him and asks, "Who touched me?" Of course, the disciples say, "Everyone is touching and bumping into you" but Jesus wants to know who touched him... not because he has some misconstrued, limited power which the woman has stolen or

because he wants to admonish her... he doesn't want her slip away with only a physical encounter with him... he wants to connect with the woman spiritually. Now upon her healing, the woman knows that Jesus is the Messiah... she is fearful she has tainted him and falls down before him but far from reprimanding her, Jesus calls her "daughter" and tells her, "Your faith has saved you." Her faith is what makes her different, a standout, from all the other people surrounding Jesus... it's her faith. In our spiritual sandwich, that's some pretty satisfying fixin's! Now, let's look at the bread St. Mark serves... the story of the synagogue official.

Jarius makes his way to the front of the crowd and upon finding Jesus falls at his feet. This a remarkable act of humility for someone of Jarius' standing but the love of a father for his dying daughter has made him unconcerned about people's opinions and judgements. He begs Jesus to come and heal his little girl. Jesus agrees to come but first has his encounter with the hemorrhaging woman... a fatal delay in Jarius' eyes for upon arriving at his home, his servants tell him, "Your daughter has died." To which Jesus tells Jarius, "Do not be afraid, just have faith"

...believe. What Jesus asks is astonishing... his daughter was merely sick and Jarius believes Jesus can heal her. Jesus now asks him to believe that he can conquer death... something only God can do. And, what do the servants, messengers and mourners do... they ridicule, mock and laugh at Jesus when he says the girl is merely sleeping. Jesus takes the girl's hand and tells to rise – her eyes flicker open... she is not only brought back from the throws of death but is also healed. The witnesses are utterly astonished and cannot believe what they have seen... “Can this be true,” they must have asked one another.

Now, if we finished our sandwich at this point, we would probably say, “that was pretty good.” But there is more! Within St. Mark's two miracle stories are amazing parallels to Jesus. The woman who is bleeding foreshadows Jesus' torture during The Passion. The crowd at Jarius' home who laugh at Jesus are no different than those who mock him at the crucifixion. Jesus' command to “give something to eat” can be connected to the Last Supper. The rising of the little girl foretells of Jesus' own triumph over death through his resurrection. And, through

it all, the common thread in these stories – the toothpick that holds our sandwich together -- is faith... the woman's faith the she will be healed... Jarius' faith that his daughter is brought back from death.

In a few moments, Father Craig, in persona Christi, will prepare a meal for us – the Eucharist. Like a sandwich that feeds our physical bodies, the blood and body offered for us is spiritual food... meant to fortify and sustain our souls. So, it is right and appropriate for us to ask ourselves, “Am I one of the many in the crowd simply jostling and bumping past Jesus? Or, am I the woman or Jarius filled with love and faith, ready, as they were, for a physical and spiritual joining with Jesus?