

Guest Meditations:

Sickness may be thought of as a prelude to death, just a whiff of our mortality. When we are healthy, and our bodies are functioning smoothly, we don't think much about finitude, the limits of life. But one of the reasons why sickness is so productive of great anguish is that sickness reminds us that we are creatures. We are not immortal. Our lives have limits. The greatest limit we face is death.

This woman in today's Gospel has not merely come from sickness to health; it is as if she has moved from death to life.

William Willimon

Jesus came to raise the dead. The only qualification for the gift of the Gospel is to be dead. You don't have to be smart. You don't have to be good. You don't have to be wise. You don't have to be wonderful. You don't have to be anything ... you just have to be dead. That's it.

Robert Farrar Capon

The Messiah was not going to save the world by miraculous, Band-Aid interventions: a storm calmed here, a crowd fed there, a mother in law cured back down the road. Rather, it was going to be saved by means of a deeper, darker, left handed mystery, at the center of which lay his own death."

Robert Farrar Capon

"The only reason the church cannot rise from its moribund condition is that it will not die—that for as long as it tries to hang on to the life it thinks it has, it will never enjoy the gift of resurrection from the dead that God gives it in Jesus. "Jesus came to raise the dead," he said—not to teach the teachable, reform the reformable, or improve the improvable."

Robert Farrar Capon



Food for Thought



Introduction:

A woman finds healing by touching Jesus' cloak, and a girl is restored to life when he takes her by the hand. In both cases a boundary is crossed: in Jesus' time the hemorrhaging woman was considered ritually unclean, polluting others by her touch, and anyone who touched a corpse also became unclean. In Mark's gospel Jesus breaks down barriers, from his first meal at a tax collector's house to his last breath on the cross as the temple curtain is torn in two. We dare to touch Jesus in our "uncleanness" and to live as a community that defines no one as an outsider.

Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, died 444

Cyril defended the orthodox teachings about the person of Christ. After a conflict involving all of the major Christian leaders of the time, it was decided that Cyril's interpretation, that Christ's person included both divine and human natures, was correct.

First Lesson, Lamentations 3:22-33:

The book of Lamentations is one of our most important sources of information about the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 587 B.C. Though the people admit that God's judgment was just, today's reading declares a fervent trust that God will not leave them forever

[2 Corinthians 8:7-15:

Paul encourages the Corinthians to honor their commitment to participate in the collection his churches are organizing for the Christians in Jerusalem. He presents Jesus as an example of selfless stewardship and reminds them that Christians have received abundantly so that they can share abundantly.]

The Gospel, Mark 4:35-41:

Jairus, a respected leader, begs Jesus to heal his daughter. A woman with a hemorrhage is ritually unclean, treated as an outcast in Jewish society. Both Jairus and the unnamed woman come to Jesus in faith, believing in his power to heal and bring life out of death.