

Reading for Weekday in Ordinary Time

3rd February 2026

First reading

2 Samuel 18:9-10, 14b, 24-25a, 30-19:3

'O my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you.'

In those days: Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak, and his head caught fast in the oak, and he was suspended between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on. And a certain man saw it and told Joab, 'Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak.' And Joab took three javelins in his hand and thrust them into the heart of Absalom.

Now David was sitting between the two gates, and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and when he lifted up his eyes and looked, he saw a man running alone. The watchman called out and told the king. And the king said, 'If he is alone, there is news in his mouth. Turn aside and stand here.' So he turned aside and stood still.

And behold, the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, 'Good news for my lord the king! For the Lord has delivered you this day from the hand of all who rose up against you.' The king said to the Cushite, 'Is it well with the young man Absalom?' And the Cushite answered, 'May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up against you for evil be like that young man.' And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!'

It was told to Joab, 'Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.' So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people, for the people heard that day, 'The king is grieving for his son.' And the people stole into the city that day as people steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 86(85):1-2. 3-4. 5-6. R1a

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me.

Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.

Preserve my soul, for I am faithful;
save the servant who trusts in you, my God.

Have mercy on me, O Lord,
for I cry to you all the day long.

Gladden the soul of your servant,
for I lift up my soul to you, O Lord.
O Lord, you are good and forgiving,
full of mercy to all who call to you.

Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer,
and attend to my voice in supplication.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.
Christ took our illnesses
and bore our diseases.
Alleluia.

Matthew 8:17

'Little girl, I say to you, arise.'

At that time: When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet and implored him earnestly, saying, '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.' And he went with him.

And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. For she said, 'If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.' And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my garments?' And his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, "Who touched me?"' And he looked round to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. And 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, there came from the ruler's house some who said, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?' But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.' And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. And when he had entered, he said to them, 'Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him. But 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. Taking her by the hand he said to her, 'Talitha cumi', which means, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' And immediately the girl got up and began walking, for she was twelve years of age, and they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Short reflection on the reading for today

At the centre of the two stories in this Gospel are two quite different personalities. One of them was Jairus, a synagogue official and probably well known to his neighbours. The other person was an unnamed woman who had an illness which excluded her from the synagogue and had probably impoverished her. They were two people of very different backgrounds, but both showed deep faith in Jesus as healer.

Jairus fell on his knees before Jesus quite openly, while the woman came up behind and secretly touched his cloak. Jairus makes his plea in public, while the woman didn't want to be noticed. Though they approach Jesus in such different ways their faith is equally strong. With a smile, Jesus called on the woman to make herself known. 'Who touched me?' He wants us to publicly witness to our trust in him. Our public witness is a support to the faith of others.