

Sick woman

We can imagine the scene. We have seen it on the tv news from the Middle East, a religious leader surrounded by men, people trying to touch him, to get some power from him. The apostles were shielding Jesus, pushing people away. They say that when people try to touch a person in this way, the arms and hands are scratched, specially by women with their finger nails. It must have been hard for her to touch Jesus. She was a weak person, losing blood all the time. The Fathers of the Church see this woman as the Gentiles, who through faith were saved. We are represented by this woman, sick and in need of healing, losing our blood through our sins.

We don't know how many times she tried to touch Jesus. She persevered, over and over again, without getting discouraged. She knew that Jesus was her last hope. She had spent all her money on physicians and only got worse. It is a veiled criticism of doctors. The apostles pushed her away time after time. She tried from different angles, for the apostles not to recognise her. She gives us an example of perseverance, of stubbornness. We need to begin and begin again all the time. We need to try to touch Jesus through the Eucharist, through the sacrament of confession, through our prayer. We need to find the way, the button to push. He is there and we need more faith to reach his mantle.

Eventually she only managed to touch the fringe of Jesus' cloak. But this was enough; she was immediately healed. Jesus is so powerful that even his garments give away grace, energy and power. Imagine his flesh when we go to Communion. Many people were touching him, but only she was healed. Why? Because she touched him with real faith, knowing that Jesus was very holy. Saint Ambrose says that we should touch Jesus not with our fingers, but with our faith, knowing that he is the Son of God. If our faith is weak, we don't have anything to touch him with. We need to ask him to increase our faith, so strong that reaches the depths of his heart.

Blessed Bishop Alvaro used to bring this Gospel to his prayer just before Mass. She touched him, we eat him; she touched his garment, we eat his flesh; she was losing blood, we drink his blood. We need to approach him from behind, with fear and reverence. We only need to take what we need; don't be greedy. We are touching the infinite power of God, be careful, we can blow up easily. It is a bit like touching an electric cable, or putting our hand into the lion's mouth. Our sins are like insulators; they don't allow us to experience his power.

Jesus stopped and asked: "Who has touched me?" The apostles were puzzled: "Everybody is touching you." Jesus answered: "Power has gone out of me." Why did he have this reaction if he knew what had happened? For us to know the miracle. If he hadn't asked this question, we wouldn't had known. A lot of things happen around Jesus that we don't know. Most of the important things occur in the center of people's souls. They will never appear on the news. All of us can talk about the little miracles that happened to us.