

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Jul 10th 2017

Many years ago now, when I was very small, regularly, down our street would come wagons and trucks selling fruits, various sizes of ice-blocks for our “Ice Box”, offering scissor-repair, and collecting rags and garbage. Some were horse-drawn and others machine-driven, but always slow enough for us to catch a ride, and sometime catch a handful of grapes or piece of ice. There was much “home-delivery” in those days with bells announcing their imminent arrival, especially the Good Humor Man. All we had to do was be available to the sounds of the bells and attentive to our desires for excitement and diversity.

We have a two-act play of grace in today’s Gospel with Jesus being the Delivery-Man in the second act and His being available for His being Who He was all the time. There is an arrival of an important official and an interrupting of a teaching session of Jesus with His Disciples. We are to assume that this “official” is a Roman whose daughter, he reports, has died. The Romans were all persons-non-thanked for their imperialistic-power presence. He pleads with Jesus Who ups and goes accompanied by His followers; always available to be Who He is! Jesus then is pictured as being present to those who profess some kind of faith, either in Him, because of Who He was, or in the works He has done.

While Jesus was responding to the request of the “very important” person, a rather “unimportant person” interrupts. For Jesus, it seems, any interruption is also an invitation. A woman comes with a physical need which is accompanied by a faith and a hope. She sneaks up behind Jesus hoping only to touch His garment. The invitation is clear and His words and actions reveal something deep inside Him. The big question for both interrupters is just why did they turn to Jesus. Was it their faith or their need?

The folks standing outside the official’s home laughed at Jesus’ telling them that the little girl was not dead, but just sleeping. He changed their tune rather quickly. I imagine that they filed His name away so when a life-need arose, they would interrupt His plans. Jesus’ plan in doing these things was to reveal the saving love of God no matter who was asking, needing, believing. The woman didn’t even state verbally her condition. She was reaching out for her own personal healing. The official too was more interested in his needs and that of his daughter. In a sense, Jesus was doing good for His purpose of showing off His Sacred Self as well. His being interrupted was both an invitation to heal and an opportunity that His person and mission might be revealed. They were healed, He was revealed; a good deal for all three.

The iceman, scissors-man, fruit-man, garbage-man all came hoping that we had needs they could satisfy. Jesus does not wait until we have the exact amount of faith before He comes. The Love of God has Its own need to be revealed and constantly comes down any street and tends to our selfish needs even before we might know them.

Larry Gillick, S.J.-Creighton University's Deglman Center for Ignatian Spirituality