

Commentary on the Gospel for Tue, Jan 30th 2024

Touch and be saved!

Blessed Gabriele Maria Allegra was a Franciscan priest who came to China in 1931 and was in pursuit of his aspiration to translate the Bible into Chinese. He moved to Hong Kong in 1948 and continued with his work on the translation. In 1968, the first complete version of the translated Catholic Chinese Bible was published in Hong Kong and greater China. As a result, he has come to be known as "St. Jerome of China."

Today's Gospel tells of two women.

As Jesus continues his assault on death, he admonishes the people for their pretentious groaning and mourning. He is totally dissatisfied with the culture of death, which stems from the belief that death is the ultimate end. And this is why he says, "The child is not dead but asleep."

The first woman has had blood loss for 12 years. According to the law, blood flow makes a person impure; she cannot generate life. The second woman – the 12-year-old daughter of Jairus - is of marriageable age. But in her, life is interrupted; she is dead. The number twelve in these two instances is not a coincidence. It refers to the 12 tribes – the whole of Israel.

These women represent Israel. Israel, although the bride of the Lord, abandoned her husband and became impure. Israel is like the dead little girl, cannot generate life. This woman believes in Jesus, and says, 'If I succeed, even to touch his mantle, I will be saved.' Her act of touching Jesus is likened to Israel falling into the hands of her husband – she is made pure and is given a new life.

In the Eucharist, we have the opportunity to touch him. In the lives of all the people around us, we have the chance to touch the image of God. To be saved, all we need to do is touch Him in the sacraments, in the Word of God and in the lives of people around us.