

Give 'ball' to Jesus, get out of way

By Father Albert Shamon
Courier columnist

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mark 5:21-43; (R1) Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24; (R2) 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15.

There is a Buddhist legend from centuries ago in which a woman in grief over her dead child went to Buddha to plead that the child might be returned to life. Buddha sent her on an unusual mission, promising to minister to her need when she returned.

She was to go and collect a bowl of peppers from all the families who had not experienced grief such as hers. Mystified, but desperate for help, she agreed to the assignment. When evening came, the woman returned. Her bowl was still empty but she was filled with understanding. No one is exempt. Everyone finds himself in darkness sooner or later.

Jairus knew about that kind of darkness. He had come to see Jesus. He pleaded with the Master, "My little daughter is at the point of death. So that she may be made well and live."



WORD FOR SUNDAY

Jairus was desperate because he came to Jesus for help. He was a ruler of the synagogue, and his colleagues would not look well on the fact that Jairus had invited Jesus into his home to heal his little girl. They would be shocked. He would be humiliated. What credentials did Jesus have? Where had He gone to school? By

what authority did He heal? Jairus couldn't say. But none of that mattered. The only thing that mattered was that his daughter get well.

Jairus was not only desperate but also truly wise: in his desperation he turned to Jesus. In a recent Gallup Poll more than half of Americans who are experiencing grief turn to God, to prayer, and to Scripture for comfort. And of those who do, 94 percent say that it is highly effective.

Well, Jairus turned to the only source of help he knew - Jesus. Before they arrived at Jairus's house, some servants came with bad news. "Your daughter is dead," they said. Why bother the Teacher further? A crushing terror struck Jairus when he heard the news. But Jesus placed His hand gently on Jairus's shoulder and said, "Fear is useless. What is needed is trust." Jairus trusted. When they arrived at his house, they found people weeping and wailing on all sides. Jesus asked, "Why this din? The child is not dead. She is asleep." The mourners began to ridicule Him. Jesus put them all out.

With the child's father and mother and His own companions, He entered the room where the child was. He said, "Little girl, get up." She did. Those who had laughed and mocked Him just a few minutes before were amazed when they saw the girl moving about. It was incredible. The dead do not come back to life! In all the commotion, no one thought of the little girl. Jesus told them to give her something to eat. The concern of Jesus.

Whether you are a basketball fan or not, you are probably familiar with the name Larry Bird - the former basketball great of the Boston Celtics.

During a retirement party for Larry Bird in Boston Garden, former Celtics Coach K.C. Jones told of diagramming a play on the sidelines, only to have Bird dismiss it, saying: "Get the ball to me and get everyone out of my way."

That's basically the message of the Jairus story. When things get desperate, when it seems you have nowhere else to turn, give the ball to Jesus and get out of the way. You will discover, as Jairus did, that Jesus will never let you down.

Kids' Chronicle Answer Key

- 1. e, 2. g, 3. c, 4. j, 5. b, 6. i, 7. d, 8. f, 9. a, 10. h

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