

HOMILY
ARCHBISHOP CHRISTOPHER PROWSE
CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN
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CATECHESIS, INSTITUTO AMERICANO

Readings

1 Samuel 17:32-33, 37, 40-51

Gospel: Mark 3:1-6

I wish to briefly make two points with regard to today's Readings.

In the First Reading we have the well-known encounter of David with Goliath.

It is a familiar story of the young David, possibly World Youth Day age, with this huge giant called Goliath. Goliath put total fear into the opposing army of Saul. They are left wondering what to do. In the midst of this indecision, the young David says to King Saul "Here I am, use me!" or words to that effect.

In the absence of any other idea, King Saul affirms the choice of David. At the start he puts his own armour on the young David but David rejects it. His approach is to completely have trust in the Lord and he says "The Lord our God in my strength!"

One aspect of this that I really like is that the Scripture says that David ran towards Goliath. It's not as if Goliath ran towards David. So in accepting this challenge David participated fully in showing great initiative and total trust in God.

Let us learn from David here. In the face of life's difficulties and fears in our own lives we too must put our total trust in the Lord our God who is our strength. Let us say all that together...the Lord our God is our strength.

There is a beautiful little expression that has been passed down in folk law that resembles this. It says "Fear knocked at the door, faith answered, there was no one there."

The second point that I would like to make comes from the Gospel. It's the miracle of Jesus with the man with the withered hand.

Jesus seems to be having a theological argument with the religious academics of his time. Jesus is attracted even more so to the three L's of the moment...the Lost, the Lame and the Least. He sees a man with a withered hand. A man with a disability.

Unexpectedly, Jesus says to the man "Put your hand out". The man, non-verbally saying to God "Here I am" and he does so and is healed immediately.

It is important to note that Jesus is very much attracted to those on the periphery of life. He is never caught up in theological arguments or too busy for us. He is with us particularly in our weaknesses. Indeed, Jesus starts with our disabilities, our weaknesses and from that gives us his strength and healing.

Many people don't grow in their Spiritual life because they really have trouble believing this. Please, please, please when you are praying and find yourself in the presence of the Lord do not give him your triumphs and trophies. Give the Lord your tears and tragedies. Please remember this, it is so important, start with your tears and tragedies when you come into the presence of the healing Lord.

We recall St Paul's great insight on this same matter when he says "When I am weak I am strong" (2 Cor 12:9-11).

Once again we come back to our key "Gos-pill" of today "The Lord our God is our strength."