

Trinity XXIV

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Preacher: Father Randall Russell

[0 : 00] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. The early church fathers had a very high view of Holy Scripture, and believed that there were primarily four different ways to interpret Scripture, with each way being just as valuable as the other.

First, there was, of course, the literal interpretation of Scripture. For example, in this morning's Gospel, Jesus healed a woman of her affliction, and raised a little girl from the dead.

And these things literally happened. But second, there is also the moral interpretation of Scripture, which focuses upon the ethical or moral understanding of any given text.

And after that, there is also the analogical or mystical interpretation of Scripture, which deals with questions pertaining to eternity and the life of the world to come.

And finally, there is the allegorical or symbolic meaning of Scripture, which asserts that there are things we can learn from Scripture beyond just the literal reading of the text.

[1 : 26] And this morning, we are going to focus upon the allegorical or symbolic meaning of Scripture, as it pertains to this morning's Gospel.

For in this morning's Gospel, we see two people in need of Jesus. One is a girl who has not yet reached physical maturity, and the other is a woman who has suffered from flow of blood for 12 long years.

Now, neither one is capable of bringing life into the world. The one, because she is a girl and not yet a woman. And the other, because she suffers from a physical ailment that at that time would have made her ceremonially unclean.

So in our Lord's day, this woman who suffered from a flow of blood for 12 agonizing years would have been treated like a leper and would have been forced to live a very, very lonely life.

Now, according to St. Augustine, the girl in this morning's Gospel text represents the Jewish people who God called to be His children in order to bring the life of God into the world.

[2 : 48] But sadly, they often failed to do this because they never fully matured or grew in God's grace. And many of them were spiritually dead, just as that little girl was literally dead in this morning's Gospel.

However, according to St. Augustine, the woman with the flow of blood in this morning's Gospel represents the Gentiles because, just like her, they too were ostracized and cut off from the Jewish community and therefore had no one to help, which is why the Gentiles sought comfort and solace in various pagan philosophies and sacrificed and shed much blood to several different pagan gods. But to no avail. Not one of them could help. Not one of them could actually heal the Gentiles of their spiritual affliction.

That is, until the Lord finally came to heal them both. For as it is written, salvation came first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.

Therefore, as our Lord was on His way to give new life to the first, that is, that little girl who represents the Jews, the latter, that is, that poor woman who represents the Gentiles, snuck up behind our Lord in order to touch His garment.

[4 : 27] And in both St. Mark and St. Luke's Gospels, when she does touch our Lord's garment, Jesus actually stops and asks, Who touched me?

The Lord, the Lord of all things, asked, Who touched me? For in Psalm 18, it is written concerning the Gentiles, A people I have not known shall serve me.

As soon as they hear of me, they obey. And so what does our Lord do after He heals the woman of her 12-year flow of blood?

He calls her daughter. Daughter, He says. He says, Be of good cheer, daughter.

Your faith has made you well. As if to say, Oh dear woman, today you are clean. Today you are not alone.

[5 : 28] Today I welcome you into the family of God. For again, according to Augustine, this woman represents the Gentiles, who at one time did not know God as their Father, who at one time were cut off from all the people of God, and who at one time had no one, no one to show them mercy.

And so Jesus Christ succeeds, where the children of Israel often failed. He successfully shows the love of God to all nations and actually gives life, brings life into the world.

Yet after our Lord heals this woman of her affliction, what does He do next? Well, He continues on His way in order to fulfill His first mission, in order to heal that little girl whose father, St. Matthew, tells us was a ruler, but who St. Mark and St. Luke specifically tell us was a ruler of a synagogue. For again, according to St. Augustine, the dead girl in this morning's gospel represents the Jewish people. therefore, before our Lord heals her, He says, make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.

For Christ Jesus came in order to wake the Jewish people from their spiritual lethargy and death, so that they too might live and grow and mature in Him, and finally fulfill that purpose for which they were first called to bring forth life and to show the love of God to the entire world.

[7 : 27] All of which is to say that in this morning's gospel reading, we see Jesus coming into our world in order to make all things new, in order to stop the flow of the blood of pagan sacrifices and replace it with His own, calling all Gentiles to the faith and in order to breathe new life into Israel so that they might live and mature and in Him truly bear God-pleasing fruit.

for ultimately Jesus Christ came in order to be the Savior of all. As St. Matthew told us earlier in his own gospel, He is a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel.

So dear Bride of Christ, the Church of the living God, a holy people from every nation and every tongue, be of good cheer.

For today, your faith has made you well. For behold, in Christ Jesus, all things become new. and this allegorical or symbolic reading of Scripture is just as much the gospel as is the literal reading of it.

[9 : 11] For the truth is that Jesus Christ has come to save all, both Jew and Gentile alike. so may no one ever think that he or she is a stranger in the house of God.

For in Christ Jesus, we all are made new. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.