

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time – June 30/July 1, 2018 – Reflection

George Orwell, in his futuristic novel "1984", presciently and ominously warned, "Big Brother is watching." With cameras at intersections, in school zones, on highways, in banks and box stores; with scanners at check-out counters, airports, and arenas; and when you're no longer watching your TV 'cause it's watching you, you know that Big Brother really is watching!!

When I turn on my PC or tablet and scroll down through my emails, you might think I was in my early 90's. I get all sorts of ads for adult diapers, retirement communities, hearing aids, and just generally anything that might have to do with geriatrics. When I pondered why the heck they were picking me out for all their offers, I remembered that for a few years now, I've been the one purchasing many of these items for my parents. Big Brother has been watching me ... only he's not seeing me but them through me!

Getting older is no picnic. Lots of folk as they get on in years begin to have physical and cognitive problems: they can be a little unsteady on their feet; a little forgetful; perhaps they don't see as well to drive or hear so well anymore so that the TV is turned up to heavy metal decibels. And, there's the problem of bladder control that can weaken with the passing of the years so that every laugh is wet, every urge is sudden, and every accident is embarrassing. There's the smell, the stain and people shy away, turn up their noses, and think unclean. The

elder becomes an outcast, condescended to, talked about as if they were tiny little toddlers or imbeciles.

Imagine the woman who reached out to Jesus, just to touch His robe, hiding in the crowd so no one would notice her. For years, her condition, her almost uncontrolled menstrual flow, relegated her to the ranks of the unclean. She couldn't go to church, people moved away from her in the market, friends didn't come around anymore, family wished she'd just go away and not burden them with her problems. The poor woman was a pariah in the town where everybody knew everybody, and everybody knew everybody else's business. She became a recluse ... it was easier to hide at home than to face judging eyes and turned backs.

What it must've taken ... desperation ... faith ... for her to leave the house that day, mingle in the crowd, all to find Him, her last hope! She touches His robe hoping against hope, believing against despair, that He could help. As she grabbed the homespun cloth of the Man from Galilee just like so many in the crowd that day were doing, she felt something like fire in her gut and then a tremendous peace filled her: the flow of blood had dried and stopped; the flow of tears was wet and bountiful.

Her courage teaches us to not fear Jesus, to reach out in our most desperate need for compassion and healing.

In His eyes, no matter what ... no matter what the burden ... no matter what the shame ... you're pure and welcomed, healed and loved ... beyond your wildest dreams.