

NUMBER 2 4 JANUARY 2016



Mercy MOMENTS.

Mercy Partners

*opening the
door to a world
where the
healing,
liberating and
life-giving
mercy of
God is
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A Loving Touch

But Jesus said, “Someone touched me, for I knew it when power went out of me.” The woman saw that she had been found out, so she came trembling and threw herself at Jesus’ feet. There in front of everybody, she told him why she had touched him and how she had been healed at once. Jesus said to her, “My daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.” (Luke 8)

The woman who touched the hem of Jesus’ garment reveals the holiness of touch. The earth has been touched by God; human beings have certainly not touched it in a holy sense. We touch relics, stones, religious objects, to give and receive. It is a sacred communication. Religious expression devoid of touch is inanimate and abstract. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (123-6) has encouraged us to respect devotional prayer because communication is more than words and prayer more than theory. The pope is drawing our awareness to the importance of the whole person – body and spirit – engaging in prayer time. The woman in the crowd needed the devotional touch in order to say her deepest prayer.

We have always held that actions speak louder than words, and in times of great human emotion we find release in the lighted candle, the bunch of flowers, the mementos. We hug, hold on, lean on and stand side by side. Actions allow us to penetrate the silence when words have died.

Jesus’ question is interesting. ‘Who touched me?’ In this particular crowd scene of pushing and shoving, Jesus is making a much-needed distinction between shove and touch. What did the woman do that was different? She related to his person, valued his holiness and witnessed his mercy. Her touch had all the hallmarks of tenderness, gentleness and respect. It was for her an avenue to healing, to freedom and to life.

‘Who touched me?’

‘Who connected with me?’

‘Who believed in me?’

‘Who brought out the best in me?’

It was a loving touch.

Mercy Moments No. 2. From Anna Burke: *The Quality of Mercy*, pp 39-40

REFLECTION

- > When have actions spoken louder than words in your life?
- > In this Year of Mercy how can we touch others with mercy?
- > How does the understanding of the earth touched by God underpin actions for eco-justice?