

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time B/2009

We all love life and want to live a rich and abundant life. That is why we try to keep ourselves in good shape and care for the health of our children and ourselves. However, in spite of this love of life, we realize that we cannot escape the reality of death. Sooner or later, one day or another, we have to confront death and leave all that we have treasured so much behind us.

When facing such a reality, a question comes often to our mind: Why shall we die? After all, what is death? Where does it come from? Why did God create it? To these questions, the Writer of the book of Wisdom answers: God did not make death. Everything of what he created from the beginning was good. Human beings have been created imperishable and capable of sharing in God's eternal life. Death entered the world by the envy of the devil. Since then, it has become part of our human nature to the point that we cannot escape it anymore.

It is clear that what the text is talking about is physical death. We know, however, that God's intention from the beginning was that we live eternally in his presence. If that is the case, then, we understand, as St John says, why God sent his son Jesus in the world, so that whoever believes in him may not die, but have eternal life.

That mission received from the Father and which consists in giving life, is what Jesus is fulfilling in today's Gospel through the healing of the sick woman and the resurrection of the daughter of the official of the Synagogue. These two cases are significantly important and tell us something of God's Kingdom in its relationship to our life. First of all, we have Jairus, the Synagogue Official, who implores Jesus to save his sick daughter. Then, we have the hemorrhagic lady who was also in search of healing after many years of misery and suffering.

In both cases, Jesus intervenes and heals the sick after they begged him. While the young girl is raised from the dead, the hemorrhagic woman is restored to full health. The first element that comes out of the Gospel is the importance of faith. In both cases, Jesus insists on faith in him. What Jesus requires in this regard is trust in him that he is able to give to those who beg him whatever they ask of him. In that sense, we can say that faith is more than the knowledge about God or things about him. It is all about our confidence and trust we must have in the word of the Scriptures, that even if our situation is humanly impossible, God can change it for the best for our good and benefit.

The hemorrhagic woman has understood it quite well. She did not want to come and face Jesus. Her faith told her that even from the back and in the midst of the crowd, if she could just be touching the cloak of Jesus, she could be healed. What she wanted in her faith is what happened to her. In the same way, Jesus asked of the chief of the Synagogue just one thing, namely not to be afraid about the gravity of the situation of his daughter, but to trust him and do what he recommended. In the end, what he wanted for his daughter by coming to Jesus in faith, is what happened to him. In other words, even if it is true that God gives us beyond our merits and what we ask of him, he gives us also according to our faith.

All this shows us also that our God is a God of the impossible. He can do more than we expect and beyond imagining. It is when we are locked in our situation, tired and do not know what to do anymore; it is when we have spent all our energy and money in looking for relief without any evident result, that God comes to our rescue and surprises us with

his healing. Here the mystery of our life remains incomprehensible and beyond our understanding. We can deal with it only in faith and trust.

Why does God do so? Why does he let us exhaust our energy and strength, and intervenes only when it pleases him in his plan? For instance, why did he let the hemorrhagic woman spend all her money without any success? Well, it is because his time is not ours and our time is not his. As the Psalm : (90, 4) says, one thousand years are like one day before the Lord. What we consider as an eternity is just like an instant before God. We count the days of our life according to our human calendar, but God has his own time in which everything is always present as though it is happening instantly.

Another truth the Gospel teaches us is the distinction we have to make between life on earth and eternal life in heaven. As a matter of fact, we have to bear in mind that, even if Jesus raised the young girl from death, she had not become eternal on earth. Even if Jesus healed the hemorrhagic woman, she eventually died of natural cause or another disease. The truth behind all this is that physical death has become our companion on earth. We have to accept it in faith and with the hope of sharing in the resurrection of Jesus at the end of our pilgrimage on earth.

What Jesus has done by raising the young girl and by healing the sick is to show them that he is the master of death and life. Therefore, he can give life to those who trust him. Jesus wanted also to show us in anticipation what awaits us who believe in him. At the end of our pilgrimage, we will share in his resurrection and the joy of the Kingdom. In his kingdom, there will be no more suffering, no more tears, no more death, but eternal joy.

Meanwhile, however, as long as we are still on earth, we have to help each other to keep our faith alive and our hope in the resurrection serene. As we need to support each other spiritually, we have to support each other also materially. As St Paul tells in the second reading, we have to share the burdens of life with the poorest among us. We have to alleviate the burdens of one another. The more we care for the poor and the needy as we alleviate their material sufferings, the more the Lord will bless us so that we may have more for our joy until the day when we will show up in the heavenly home of our Father. That is the grace we have to ask in this mass. We ask also that the Lord increase our faith in him, in spite of the present situation of suffering and misery in which we find ourselves. God bless you all!

Wisdom 1, 13-15; 2, 23-24; 2 Corinthians 8, 7, 9, 13-15; Mk 5, 21-43



Homily Date: June 28, 2009
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Contact: www.mbala.org
Document Name: 20090628homily.pdf