

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time B2021

The readings of this Sunday talk about the importance of life and trust in God. They show that God is capable of enhancing life in us and of destroying all that diminishes it. They also invite us to entrust our lives to God so that he may save us in our time of need.

In the first reading, the book of Wisdom affirms that our God is a living God. Therefore, everything he has created has been made imperishable. In that sense, death does not come from him, but from the envy of the devil that wants to destroy God's creatures.

What is behind this text is the idea of the fragility of human existence that is constantly threatened by the reality of death. There is also the idea that God is the master of life and his power overcomes death. The last idea is related the truth of the power of God to give life anew to his creatures.

This text helps us understand the point of today's Gospel as Jesus raises from death the daughter of the Synagogue's official and heals the hemorrhagic woman. The Gospel starts with the story of one of the officials of the synagogue whose daughter was sick and who, pushed by faith, begged Jesus to heal her. Then, it shows how when that girl died, Jesus gave her life back. After that, the Gospel gives an account of a hemorrhagic woman who, pushed also by faith, touched the clothes of Jesus in the midst of the crowd and was healed.

What do we learn from today's Gospel? Today I want to talk to you about the healing touch of Jesus and the power of faith. On a daily life, we touch very often people we love. We embrace our children; we kiss our loved ones. We tap on the shoulders of friends, familiars and relatives. This is a touch of relationship, intimacy and friendship. It conveys the feelings we have for them; it contains a message that they recognize in a very particular way.

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks the disciples: "Who has touched my clothes"? This is really strange and even silly. Why to ask such a question when surrounded by such a crowd? It is not the first time that Jesus is entangled in the crowd and touched. He had himself touched people many times at different occasions, but why to ask this time about who has touched him. There lies the point of today's Gospel.

Jesus' touch is the touch of God; it is a healing touch. The healing touch detects where faith is and is provoked by an expression of faith. Jesus exercises the healing touch in order to show the healing power of the Father who is operating in him. Today's Gospel shows us clearly the connection between the healing touch and faith. To the official, Jesus says, "Do not be afraid, just have faith". To the hemorrhagic woman, he says, "Daughter, your faith has saved you".

It is clear that faith Jesus is talking about has nothing to do with knowledge of God or some doctrine about God. It is all about an absolute and confident trust in him that he can deliver us from our troubles and give us what we need. That is why the hemorrhagic woman, in a simple gesture of trust, came from behind in the crowd and touched Jesus with the firm conviction of obtaining the healing. And what she wanted with the whole of her heart, happened to her instantaneously. The same is true with the official of the synagogue whose daughter Jesus raised from death.

Such examples show us that nothing is impossible to God. However, we have always to remember that the healing of the hemorrhagic woman, as well as the resurrection of the young girl has a character of example. Of course, the woman and the girl were healed and

restored to life, but they eventually died. Jesus saved them in order to show us that he is the master of life and death. What he has done with these two people, he can also do with us, but we have to trust him and firmly believe in him.

All that brings us to the distinction we have to make between life on earth and life in heaven. We should never forget that those two people died a physical death though Jesus saved them once from their disease. That is a sign that physical death has become part of our human life. But, it is not the last word of our life. The last word belongs to the eternal life and the resurrection in which we will share.

Hope for the resurrection and waiting for eternal life should not, however, push us to despise the present life on earth. Instead, they should bring us to use the present conditions of life with wisdom, knowing that here on earth, we are just pilgrims. When God heals us, he lets us taste in anticipation the joy of heaven.

Meanwhile, we have to help each other as much as we can in alleviating the suffering of one another until the day we will all share in the resurrection of Jesus in heaven. We have to become instruments of God's healing touch to others. We have to help others feel the healing touch of Christ in their lives.

Now, let me finish by referring to the time of healing. It was only after spending all her money in visiting the physicians that the sick woman came across Jesus and was healed. In the same way, it was only after the daughter of the chief of the synagogue died that Jesus came to their home and raised her from death. But, why is it so that God lets us exhaust our energy and strength, and intervenes in our troubles only in the last minute?

I do not really know. This is a big mystery I cannot pierce with my mortal and human understanding. I hope that one day, when the Lord will give me the chance to see him face to face, this will be one of the questions I will ask him. What I can say, however, is that God's time is not human time. Human time refers to the human calendar, God's time is eternal and out of human calculation. Before him, "one thousand years are like one day" Ps 90: 4.

What we consider as an eternity of our problems is just like an instant before God. Perhaps we cry and wait for months or years with our difficulties with the impression that it lasts too long, but for God it is as though it is just happening. In God's time, everything is always present as though it is happening instantly. That is why we should never be discouraged when we struggle with problems and difficulties. We have to trust God that he will eventually put an end to our misery when his time will come.

Let us, then, ask God to increase our faith and trust in him. May he help us to always count on him! May God bless you all!

Wisdom 1:13-15; 2: 23-24; 2 Corint 8: 7, 9, 13-15; Mark 5: 21-43



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