

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time B2024

We all love life and want to live as long as possible. For that reason, we care for our health and that our family. However, in spite of that love of life, we cannot escape the reality of death. Sooner or later, we have to confront death and leave behind us all that we have treasured so much.

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 that he created from the beginning was good. Human beings have been created imperishable and in the image of his own nature. 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.

For sure, what the text is talking about is physical death. We know, however, that God's intention from the beginning was that we live eternally with him, in his Kingdom. That is what St John suggests by saying, "God sent his son Jesus in the world, so that whoever believes in him may not die, but has eternal life" (3: 16).

That mission of 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 Synagogue's official. These two cases are significantly important for us. They tell us something of God's Kingdom in its relationship to human 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 them. While the young girl was raised from the dead, the hemorrhagic woman was restored to full health. The most important thing that our Lord highlights in this Gospel is the importance of faith.

Faith here has to be understood as trust in our Lord that he is capable of giving to those who beg him whatever they ask of him. Faith is more than the knowledge about God or the things about him. It is all about 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.

The hemorrhagic woman understood it quite well. She did not want to come and face our Lord. Her faith told her that even from the back and in the midst of the crowd, if she could just touch his cloak, she would be healed. What she wanted in her faith is what happened to her.

In the same way, our Lord 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 recommends. In the end, what he wanted for his daughter by coming to our Lord in faith 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.

The Gospel of this Sunday shows us that our Lord 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 not knowing what to do anymore; it is when we have spent all our energy and money in looking for relief without any 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: says, “one thousand years are like one day before the Lord” (90:4). 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 perpetually present as though it is happening instantly.

Today’s Gospel invites us to distinguish life on earth and eternal life in heaven. We have to bear in mind that, even if our Lord raised the young girl from death, she had not become eternal on earth. Even if our Lord 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 our Lord has done by raising the young girl and by healing the sick woman is to show that he is the master of death and life. Therefore, he can give life to those who trust him. Our Lord 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, 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 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 the Lord to increase our faith in him, in spite of the present situation of suffering in which we find ourselves.

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



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