

Homily of Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B, 2021

Wisdom, 1:13-15, 23-24; Psalm 30:2, 4-6, 11-13; 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15; Mark 5:21-43

Job 1:21, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." John 14:3, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be." By these two passages and similar ones, we believe that our life and death are in God's hand.

But the first reading states, "God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living. For he fashioned all things that they might have being, and the creatures of the world are wholesome, there is not a destructive drug among them ..." (Wisdom 1:13-14). We can infer from this passage that killing and slaughtering of human beings, wars, genocides, holocausts, killing of the unborn, and all kinds of destruction of human life are not God's making but the work of the devil and his agents. The first reading, further states, "But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world ..." (Wisdom 1:24). Unfortunately, many people have embraced the vices that lead to the culture of death from the devil, instead of the virtues that lead to the culture of life from God. We pray for the conversion of the agents of the devil who inflict our world with the culture of death.

Another kind of death that is caused by the devil is spiritual death, which is why St. Paul writes in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death." Jesus advises us how to save ourselves from spiritual death. According to the Gospel of Mark, when Jesus began his ministry, his first words are, "Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). In John 6:29 Jesus says, "This is the work of God, that you believe in the one he sent." If we stop listening to the devil and falling into sin, but believe in Jesus and obeying his commands (the gospel), we will surely be saved from spiritual death.

St. Paul admonishes us in the second reading, "For you know the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). Jesus differentiates himself from the devil in John 10:10, "A thief [the devil] comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

Jesus, in the Gospel of today, shows that he came that we may have life and have it more abundantly. The woman who was afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years wanted her life back. She spent all that she had and suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors but got no cure. She reached out and touched the clothes of Jesus. Her faith was so great that power came out of Jesus and cured her. "Immediately her flow of blood dried up;" and she got her life back.

Jairus, a synagogue official, also, reached out to Jesus and invited him saying, "My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay your hands on her that she may get well and live." "While he was still speaking, people from the synagogue official's house arrived and said, 'Your daughter has died; why trouble the teacher any longer?' Disregarding the message that was reported, Jesus said to the synagogue official, 'Do not be afraid; just have faith'" (Mark 5:35-36). Jesus put out those who were weeping, and who ridiculed him, and those who caused commotion, and healed the girl.

No doubt, our world is hemorrhaging from the culture of death. We are all hemorrhaging from killings, insecurity, inhuman treatment, uncertainty, fear, anxiety, hunger, sickness, and various kinds of hardship and crises. We pray for our own healing and the healing of our world. In our prayer and Eucharistic celebration, we reach out and touch Jesus as the woman did. May he respond with his healing power. We are inviting Jesus to our helpless situations, as Jairus did. May he visit us, put out those who ridicule God's wonderful creation, those who cause commotion, and those who bring hardship and agony on people. May he wipe our tears, heal us and our world. May our world experience sanity. We entrust our life and death only in God's hand. May our faith in him not be shaken. Amen.

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