

Homily of Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, 2024

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.

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. In Mark’s Gospel, when Jesus began his ministry, his first words were, “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, 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 shows in today’s gospel 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, which 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. He, then, healed the girl.

No doubt, our world is hemorrhaging from the culture of death. Our society is 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 society and world.

In our prayer and Eucharistic celebration, we approach and touch Jesus with the hemorrhaging issues in our lives as the woman did. May he respond with his healing power. Let us invite Jesus to our helpless situations, as Jairus did. May he visit us, put out all ridicules and all commotions in our lives, and all that cause spiritual and physical death to us. May Jesus proclaim upon us the words, "I say arise;" and let his words come to fulfillment. Let us arise from sins. Let us arise from afflictions. Amen.

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