

13th Sunday In Ordinary Time

Theme: “DO NOT BE AFRAID, JUST HAVE FAITH”

As you may know, fear is good when it keeps us safe from danger. God has built it into our nervous system to give us survival instincts for protection from danger. That is “Good Fear.” But we know fear can become a mental health problem if it is not addressed in a healthy way. It can adversely affect your life. The good news is this: many researchers confirm that most things we are afraid of do not happen. Even if it does happen, it is less serious than one expected.

Throughout Scriptures, we read how Jesus helped people overcome their fears. If you recall this past Sunday’s Gospel reading, Jesus’ disciples were very much afraid when they met the deadly storm at the Sea of Galilee. Jesus took away their fear by saying to the storms, “Quiet, be still.” Mark tells us, “The wind ceased and there was great calm.”

In today’s Gospel reading, Jesus takes away the fear of the woman with hemorrhages and Jairus, the Synagogue official, whose daughter was dying. Jesus calms Jairus’ fear and gives him hope with these words, “DO NOT BE AFRAID, JUST HAVE FAITH.” He raises Jairus’ daughter back to life. To the woman, Jesus says, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction.” Remember, Jesus never promises and fails.

Both the first reading and Gospel reading deal with an ordinary life but more so with an eternal life. In the first reading, the writer of the Book of Wisdom tells us how death came into the world due to envy of the devil. Here, death is more than physical death. The sacred writer has in mind a spiritual death which comprises an alienation from God, of which biological/physical death is a sign. Just like the writer of the Book of Genesis, the author of the Book of Wisdom also reminds us that God created us to be imperishable in the image of his own nature, but original sin ruined it.

In the Gospel reading, we read how Jesus Christ through his earthly ministry restored us to his Father. In the last week’s Gospel reading, Mark gave us one of his four miracles, namely the calming of the storm at the Sea of Galilee. In today’s reading, Mark presents us with two more miracles, namely the healing of the woman with hemorrhages for 12 years and Jairus’ daughter, who just died as Jesus was coming to heal her. Both the woman with the blood flow and the daughter of Jairus were beyond

the help of any earthly power. These stories have some things in common: female sufferers, the number of 12, and faith and fear. We also see in these miracles signs of God's power, restoring life and health through Jesus. It tells us that Jesus' saving power can overcome sickness and even death.

Jairus, whose name means "May He (God) enlighten," was a ruler at the Synagogue. Mark tells us that when Jairus sees Jesus, he falls at his feet and pleads earnestly with him to heal his beloved daughter who is dying. It was when Jesus was on his way to Jairus' house that he got the sad news that his daughter had just died so he should not trouble the teacher, Jesus. Jesus then told him, "DO NOT BE AFRAID; JUST HAVE FAITH." In both the gospels of Matthew and Luke, Jairus' daughter had just died, and her father wanted Jesus to raise her back to life. Beloved, it took considerable courage for Jairus to kneel down publicly before Jesus to invite him to raise his beloved daughter back to life. How many men would kneel down in front of another man and ask for assistance? His faith in Jesus was rewarded. Jesus brought back his daughter to life. It's a blessing to be humble and have faith.

In the story of the woman with the hemorrhages, we're told she had been suffering for 12 years with this blood flow and spent all her money on doctors, yet she was not cured. Again, remember, she did not just sit down and wait for miracles. She spent all her wealth on medical treatment and when all failed her, her only hope is in Jesus Christ, the divine physician. She said, "If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured." Her courage and faith in Jesus was rewarded, Jesus cured her. According to Jewish culture, she is considered ritually unclean because of her blood flow. Lord, have mercy! Jesus was aware of it but did not allow it to prevent him from curing this woman, who has been suffering for 12 years. In Biblical times, there was an inner conviction that physical contact of a holy person effects healing. So this woman was convinced that by touching the clothes of Jesus, the powerful person, she would be healed. Yes, her faith in Jesus brought her a supernatural healing. Beloved, again, remember St. Paul's advice: "WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT." Jairus and this woman with hemorrhages were both healed because they both "WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT."

In the second reading, St. Paul promised the Christian community in Jerusalem that he will take collections in the churches he founded in Corinth to help the poor and the needy in Jerusalem community. He wrote this letter to motivate and encourage the Christians in Corinth to be more generous in their support of the Christian community in Jerusalem.

We have been trying to do the same today also throughout Catholic churches in the world. Our weekend collections are not just used for our parish but also to support the diocese and mission dioceses throughout the world. I am always very grateful to you all for your kindness and generosity. May God reward you for your generosity. Let us always remember that "WE WALK BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT." The woman with the blood flow and Jairus are a models for us also that if we walk by faith and not by sight, the IMPOSSIBLE becomes POSSIBLE.

May Holy Mother Mary and her beloved husband, St. Joseph, continue intercede for us that we will not be afraid to put our total faith in Jesus Christ. "DO NOT BE AFRAID; JUST HAVE FAITH." Let us continue to walk by faith, not by sight. Amen!