

13th Ordinary Sunday
June 27, 2021
“Fear – or Faith?”

Wis 1:13...2:24
2 Cor 8:7...15
Mk 5:21...43

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Death and dying are something with which we all have to deal. They are something that no one can escape. They are something we naturally fear. Moreover, they can be the most painful experiences of life itself.

Most of us are faced with the death of others before we must face our own death. In fact, often, we fear the death of those we love more than the fear of our own death.

When someone we love is taken from us, there is a void that no one else can fill. No one can ever replace the unique specialness that a particular friend or loved one brought into our life.

When someone close to us dies unexpectedly, it can shake us to the core of our being. Suddenly, they are gone. There was no warning. We had no time to prepare our heart and soul.

Even when someone dies after a long illness, there is still the loss of who they were for us for so long. Their death might have relieved them of their suffering and pain, if that was the case – but now, we must deal with the emotional pain of losing them.

Everyone processes the death of a loved one differently. We all suffer emotionally. Some experience deep emotional loss – and for a long period of time. Some seem to recover and get on with their personal lives far better than others. Thus, we all suffer in our own way and for what is our own length of time.

Our own death is something different, altogether. Self-preservation and staying alive is a natural, human instinct. But facing death, we must – and how we live will help to prepare us for our own death – whenever and however it comes.

The Book of Wisdom teaches us that God did not create us for death, but for life. God created us to live here for awhile – and then to be transformed into a more abundant life in His presence forever. We had only to live in harmony with God’s plan for the nature He gave us – with free will, always choosing what was authentically good and true and beautiful.

However, satan intervened and entered our world. Satan resisted all that was God's creation and brought evil into the world. Evil is all that is anti-God. And satan cloaked evil with the appearance of goodness, truth, and beauty that was deceptive and led away from God.

Sadly, our primal parent chose that godless path, and human sin came into the world. They lost the clarity of vision and grace that they enjoyed. And with their sin came death. The wages of sin are always death of some kind. It can be the death of a love – of a relationship – of soul and spirit – and the ultimate death of our physical body in this life as we know it, here.

Consequently, there was no hope for the human soul and spirit – from the dawn of our creation until Jesus came. Jesus revealed that temptation could be resisted – that sin could be conquered – that evil could be overcome – and that death is the doorway to eternal life.

In St. Matthew's Gospel, Jesus told the synagogue official not to fear death or all the losses that death can bring. Instead, he was to have faith. Jairus was to believe in Jesus – to enter into a relationship with Jesus – to trust in whatever Jesus taught – and to follow wherever Jesus led. In other words, Jairus was to become a true disciple of Jesus in every circumstance he faced and in every moment he lived.

Although the girl had died, Jesus disregarded the mourners and their disdain. He entered the young girl's room, took her hand, and raised her up! Was she truly dead? Was she in a death-like coma? Was Jesus downplaying what he really did to avoid the authorities? Or was what he did a sign of his Resurrection to come – and of the possibility of our own someday?

Brothers and Sisters, any parent can identify with the synagogue leader's anxiety, fear, and potential loss of his 12 year old daughter. We all can have fear and misgivings about our own death and the dying process that precedes it. Faith is the only antidote – Faith in the love, the mercy, and the marvelous plan of God. It must be a relationship with God and with Jesus that chooses good instead of evil – truth over lies and distortion – true beauty over the allure of any and every sin. We cannot do it alone. But with Jesus, we can resist any temptation – and the evil of satan himself.

So let us pray that we may always walk with Jesus and trust in the outcome of wherever he leads us, including death itself!

Amen.

June 27, 2021

Msgr. Russell G. Terra