

**ECHOING GOD'S WORD
IN THE
CATHOLIC FAITH COMMUNITY**

**13th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
June 30, 2024**

SCRIPTURES:

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

How come there is evil in God's world?
Our stewardship model is Christ.
Jesus has power over life and death.
God hears the cry of those in need.

READ THE SCRIPTURES:

Read the Scriptures carefully in your group, beginning with the Gospel. Take a few minutes in silence to hear the Lord speaking to the heart. Remember that the word of God in the Bible is primarily addressed to the Church community. What does God want the community to hear today?

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND:

Mark:

Parents do not expect that their children will die before they do. But when that happens, or whenever someone among us dies, we turn to Jesus. The religious leaders of that day knew where power over illness and death was to be found. In God alone is there the assurance of life. So, Jairus, a synagogue leader, came to Jesus. Synagogue leaders were not priests of the Temple. They were on the same level as Jesus. Surely, Jesus had some special connection with God that Jairus himself did not have, though.

A 12-year-old girl in ancient times was not the 12-year-old of today. She was of an age to be married now and to raise a family. She would provide another generation of family for her father, an extension of his life. She had survived where perhaps few of her siblings had beyond this age. A third of children died before the age of six; by the age of 16, 60% would be dead; 10% lived out their thirties. 3% lived to be 60. The whole community had an interest in her life.

But then, tragedy has already struck: She has died! There is no hope for her or for her family. Why bother anybody now? Let us go and join the mourners at home.

The woman who suffered from loss of blood had to approach Jesus without his knowing it. She was considered unclean ritually and not allowed in the fellowship of those who worshipped God. Physicians do not get a good report in this passage! (Luke, the "physician," will omit this criticism of doctors in his Gospel!) She only grew worse. She was not allowed to touch Jesus or any other rabbi. But she has grown desperate now. She had to break the rules. There was no other hope.

Jesus, unlike other religious leaders, cares about women. He heals them, too. Two women in one single episode!

God never intended that people be sick. It was the sin of humans that introduced illness and death into the world. Jesus begins the task that we must carry on. Forgiveness of personal sin is the

beginning. He also heals. That is the next phase. He inaugurates the kingdom of his Father by healing illness and raising the dead. So must we.

Wisdom:

Here, the ancient religious philosopher struggles with the problem of death. How can it be that the God, who is all good, is the sovereign Lord of a world in which death has intruded? How can good and evil co-exist? “Wisdom” in Israel does not indulge in abstract speculation; “action” is the way to true wisdom. Israel must seek the God who has all power. In God is all the answer we need.

Corinthians:

Paul was also a fundraiser! Here, we find him appealing to the Church at Corinth for financial support for the Church in Jerusalem. He uses all the right arguments: he praises; he appeals to their sense of fairness; he reminds them of Christ who gave everything away! Ultimately, he says that all Christians have a right to claim from each other if one has more than the other.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do you see *healing* as ultimately relating to God? Doctors provide assistance so that the body can heal itself or they prepare the body so that God can work on it! Do you believe that? Do you understand that you too have a *healing function* in the world? In what ways are you a healer? Do you get your power from Christ?

2. What barriers did the people in today’s Gospel have to overcome in order to come to Jesus, the Healer? The synagogue leader? What would the people of his synagogue say if he went to Jesus for the healing of his daughter? After she had died, was it proper to allow this rabbi to come into his house? The woman who has a hemorrhage? What religious and culture barrier did she have to overcome? What do you have to overcome when you go to Jesus for forgiveness and for healing?

3. Do you go to the priest when you are sick? Do you understand that the prayer of the Church is the most important preliminary to medical treatment? Do you go to a doctor when you are ill? Do you pray for your doctor and for all medical personnel? Have you celebrated the sacrament of reconciliation before going into the hospital? Do you see this as preparation for the healing work of God? How about anointing of the sick? What role does the sacrament have?

PRAYING TOGETHER

Lord, Healer of Souls, heal my body too, so that I may give you glory!

Let me bring healing and salvation to all around me.

“Talitha koum!” Little girl, get up!

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

Among the various cultures that the Church has been called to evangelize, it has had to confront certain customs that are inherently unnatural, inhuman, and evil. The practice of allowing sick and deformed babies to starve to death is not just a practice of primitive societies. In some cultures, the old are no longer considered productive and are sent off by themselves to die in the wilderness. (Notice some similar modern-day practices.) In its valuing of all human life, the Church has developed the *Pastoral Care of the Sick* with the sacrament of anointing of the sick and viaticum for the dying. When someone has died, the *Rite of Christian Burial* is celebrated in the community with the family of the deceased.

In the Church today, we do not refer to anointing as “The Last Rites.” The last rites are properly the burial of the dead. The last rite for the living is the *Rite of Viaticum*. The Eucharist is given “for the journey” into eternal life as a last sacrament. The anointing with oil is called *The Rite of Anointing of the Sick*. One should not be at the point of death for this sacrament. It is a celebration of faith in the healing and forgiving power of Jesus Christ entrusted to the Church. Those who are sick should be anointed so that they may be forgiven their sins and thus empowered to call upon their own healing energies to restore them to health. The *Anointing of the Sick* may be repeated as many times as we are sick in our lifetime.

A priest or a bishop presides at a celebration of the *Rite of Anointing*. But the whole community of faith exercises healing when it ministers to those who are sick in praying for them, visiting them, caring-giving, and spiritual encouragement. The sacrament does not stand in isolation from the rest of the believing community. Many ministries and caregiving services are necessary for the fullness of Christian concern to be expressed. Deacons and laypersons are true ministers to the sick, not of sacrament but by witness.

Those who are sick and those who are dying hold a very special place in our hearts.

The Catechism: # 1500-1509, 1512-1529

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