

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – June 27, 2021 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24

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, and there is not a destructive drug among them nor any domain of the netherworld on earth, for justice is undying. For God formed man to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made him. But by the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who belong to his company experience it.

Psalm: Ps 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11, 12, 13

R. (2a) I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

I will extol you, O LORD, for you drew me clear
and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.

O LORD, you brought me up from the netherworld;
you preserved me from among those going down into
the pit.

R. (2a) I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

Sing praise to the LORD, you his faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.

For his anger lasts but a moment; a lifetime, his good will.
At nightfall, weeping enters in, but with the dawn,
rejoicing.

R. (2a) I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

Hear, O LORD, and have pity on me;

O LORD, be my helper.

You changed my mourning into dancing;

O LORD, my God, forever will I give you thanks.

R. (2a) I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15

Brothers and sisters: As you excel in every respect, in faith, discourse, knowledge, all earnestness, and in the love we have for you, may you excel in this gracious act also. 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. Not that others should have relief while you are burdened, but that as a matter of equality your abundance at the present time should supply their needs, so that their abundance may also supply your needs, that there may be equality. As it is written: Whoever had much did not have more, and whoever had little did not have less.



Gospel: Mark 5:21-43

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around him, and he stayed close to the sea. One of the synagogue officials, named Jairus, came forward. Seeing him he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him, saying, "My daughter is at the point of death. Please, come lay your hands on her that she may get well and live." He went off with him, and a large crowd followed him and pressed upon him.

There was a woman afflicted with hemorrhages for twelve years. She had suffered greatly at the hands of many doctors and had spent all that she had. Yet she was not helped but only grew worse. She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak. She said, "If I but touch his clothes, I shall be cured." Immediately her flow of blood dried up. She felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. Jesus, aware at once that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who has touched my clothes?" But his disciples said to Jesus, "You see how the crowd is pressing upon you, and yet you ask, 'Who touched me?'" And he looked around to see who had done it. The woman, realizing what had happened to her, approached in fear and trembling. She fell down before Jesus and told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be cured of your affliction."

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." He did not allow anyone to accompany him inside except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they arrived at the house of the synagogue official, he caught sight of a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. So he went in and said to them, "Why this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep." And they ridiculed him. Then he put them all out. He took along the child's father and mother and those who were with him and entered the room where the child was. He took the child by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum," which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise!" The girl, a child of twelve, arose immediately and walked around. At that they were utterly astounded. He gave strict orders that no one should know this and said that she should be given something to eat.

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

The First Reading says that God did not make death. Alright, then, who did? The reading says it entered the world by means of the devil's envy. This only makes the problem worse, doesn't it, but maybe we can take a stab at understanding it. The devil's envy. What is envy, and how could it bring about death? You and I have beheld with our own eyes, greedy eyes sometimes, what another person possesses: wealth or power or good looks or talent or strength or control or whatever else. Their success can sting and give us anguish over our own lack. We feel—well it is hard to describe what we feel: anger, fear, panic, and who knows what else. Multiply that by a million and you will understand how the devil felt when he first got to earth. He had been an archangel, one of the greatest beings in God's creation, second only to God himself. Lucifer, as he was called then (meaning "light-bearer"), was dazzled by God's greatness. He liked it but he did not like being only finitely great in comparison! He found within himself an irresistible envy of God! It was like the positive pole of one magnet when held up to another magnet's positive pole. Envy. It propelled him straight out of heaven. He landed with a thud on earth. He tumbled across the garden of bounty that God had created. This ex-angel now walked bestially, in stunned silence, and amidst shimmering beauty, innocence and intricacy that were not his. Then he came upon the most difficult sight of all. It froze him in his tracks. His eyes lit upon human beings, in their first purity, as yet unsullied. They were "imperishable, and made in God's own image," the First Reading says.

The poet Milton imagined what the devil must have thought of them: "O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold, ...whom my thoughts pursue with wonder, and could love, so lively shines in them divine resemblance, and such grace the hand that formed them on their shape hath poured. ...*The father of lies was gravely tempted toward loving these two. But anger and jealous rage knocked this unique temptation aside. He decided to capture them instead of loving them. "I can suck them into myself," he thought, "their beauty and all its traces. If I possess them I will be great again. I will be able to continue my war against God and I can win it! Horror and death are small prices for what I will gain!" He was in the process of creating death. Take over and make it mine! By contrast, let us understand what human life could be like without jealousy and envy. The Gospel says this: What came to be through [Christ] was life, and this life was the light of the human race. Jesus is satisfied to be himself. He is humble. Not hostile. He grieves for others instead of for his own losses. The daughter of the synagogue official is just "asleep," he says. The crowd laughs. Asleep! What a joke. But Jesus, with God's own assurance, knew that love is stronger than death, and so he walked through their ridicule, woke the dead girl, and nestled her deep into the rich love that had created her. Only love brings good. Envy brings death. "Evil, be thou my good," Satan said! [Milton IV, 110] What do you and I say?

*From Book Four of Milton's Paradise Lost, 358-365. To put this poetry into plain 21st century prose:

Oh Hell! What are these creatures I am looking at with such grief? I could even *love them!* They fill me with wonder, so much wonder. They so resemble the divine one in his dazzling light. And look how much grace his hand has poured on them, his hand that formed them.

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. "For God formed man to be imperishable; the image of his own nature he made him." (Wisdom 1:14). What in humankind's nature is made in God's own image? Is it true of all of humankind or just Christians?
2. This reading is about sharing your abundance. What do you have that you can share? How much time are you willing to give to another? How can you share some of your talents? How much of your treasure are you willing to share? When you share do you also receive?
3. Did Jesus leave anything that you might touch if you had a problem and you just wanted to quietly touch/receive something that might help? What? The Eucharist? The woman with the hemorrhage was shunned. Are women in some cultures still oppressed?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

O God, who through the grace of adoption chose us to be children of light, grant, we pray, that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

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Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen