

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

- It was a moment that Linda Maliani would never forget.
 - While giving Alyssa...her two-year old daughter a bath...
 - she noticed a lump...on the back of her neck.
 - She immediately knew...it wasn't normal.
 - She scheduled an appointment with her pediatrician.
 - After a round of tests...
 - they also discovered a large tumor in her abdomen...
 - it was stage-four neuroblastoma.
 - As if that were not bad enough...
 - the doctors told her...
 - they would not be able to remove the tumor...
 - it was near too many major arteries.
 - Although the doctors assured her...
 - that they would do all that they could...to extend her life...
 - but they held out no hope for a cure.
 - Faced with the threat of losing her daughter...
 - Linda turned to her faith for consolation.
 - Since her children had been born...
 - going to Mass and prayer...
 - were not a priority.
 - But she now knelt down...
 - right next to her daughter and prayed:
 - *"God, I don't know where you are, but I have to find you."*
 - And from within her heart...she immediately heard an answer:
 - *"I'm in the Church."*
 - From that point on...Linda began going to Mass.
 - She read the gospels...
 - and marveled at how people...came to Jesus...
 - from miles around...in order to be healed.
 - Her daughter needed that too.
 - Her daughter needed a miracle like that.
 - So she decided to go to Mass...every day...
 - asking for that kind of a miracle.
 - She also asked others to pray.
 - And shortly after...
 - one of her cousins contacted her...
 - to say that a friend of hers...
 - would be driving Mother Teresa of Calcutta...
 - while she was visiting New York.

- They arranged for the family...
 - to attend one of the Masses with her.
- And afterwards...she met with them...
 - and moved by their story...
 - she handed them three Miraculous Medals...
 - and taught them to pray:
 - *“Mary, Mother of Jesus, make our baby all right.”*
 - As she prayed with them...a peace came over the saint’s face...
 - and she told them:
 - *“Your baby is going to be fine...she’s going to grow up.”*
 - As you might imagine...her words...
 - they gave them tremendous consolation and faith.
- So they continued to pray with those words...
 - as Alyssa endured several months of chemotherapy.
 - In the course of her treatments...
 - the doctors attempted a surgery...
 - in which they were able to remove most of her tumor.
 - Given the success...
 - they wanted to try again...
 - to see if they could remove the parts...
 - near the major blood vessels.
 - Alyssa’s parents continued to pray...
 - hoping that this final surgery...
 - would be the miracle...they had been waiting for.
- Well about half an hour into the surgery...
 - one of the doctors came into the waiting room...
 - her eyes filled with tears...
 - and told them...
 - that when they opened Alyssa up...
 - there was no sign of a tumor!
 - In fact...her healing was so complete...
 - there wasn’t even any scar tissue...from the first surgery.
 - The doctors were so astonished...
 - that they then began to worry...
 - that they were operating...on the wrong child!
 - Linda and her husband...
 - could only stand there in amazement...
 - praising God...for the answer to their prayers.

- The leper in today's gospel...
 - learned that...not only is Jesus able to heal us...
 - He is willing to.
 - Jesus wants to do what's best for us...
 - and He is willing to work miracles in our lives...
 - if that's what we truly need.
 - So when faced with situations that appear to be hopeless...
 - it is good to pray for miracles...
 - and to ask others to pray as well.
- But at the same time...we all know that miracles are rare.
 - For every parent whose prayer is answered with a miracle...
 - there are many, many others who are not.
 - It takes great faith to believe in miracles...
 - even greater faith to believe that God will do one for us.
 - but how strong is the faith...of the person who believes...
 - that God can and will bring great good out of...
 - whatever hopeless situation we face...
 - even if no miracles occur.
- What kind of good can come from sickness and suffering...
 - especially from that of an innocent child?
 - On the surface...
 - there are not many satisfactory answers.
 - But those who suffer...even children...
 - hey can inspire us by their courage...
 - in the way they face their illness.
 - They can teach us what is most important in life...
 - especially when we get caught up...
 - in trying to achieve worldly success.
 - And they can inspire us to hope...
 - no matter how challenging our lives become.
 - Sick people who accept their suffering with courage...
 - very often lead others to believe in God once again.
 - And the healing of a soul like that...
 - is an even more important miracle...
 - than the healing of the body.
- Not only did Jesus heal people...
 - while he walked this earth...
 - but He still continues to this day.
 - So let's continue to hope for and expect miracles...
 - for ourselves and our loved ones.
 - But let's do so with a faith...
 - that God loves us...
 - and will bring great good out of whatever difficulties we face...
 - no matter what the outcome of our prayer.