

Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time – Cycle B

We hear about life and death in our readings today. In our first reading from Wisdom we hear right off the bat that ‘God did not make death.’ In the gospel we hear about the woman with hemorrhages who had a limited life because she was ‘unclean.’ We hear about the synagogue official’s daughter of 12 who had died. When we hear about death we immediately think of physical death but the author of Wisdom was not thinking of physical death. God formed us to be imperishable, or in other words, God made us to live forever in heaven. There was never any notion that our physical bodies would last forever on this world. God does not go against His natural law, which He created, and the natural law is that we were formed from dust and to dust shall we return.

We are so quick to go immediately to the physical death, just as we immediately think of life as our physical life. Do you think that Jesus was talking about a full life of material luxuries when he said, “I have come so that you might have life, life to the fullest? You know, a life full of castles, big herds of goats, boat trips on the sea, and big banquets in Cana. If you want to know how Jesus defined life you only have to read the gospels. Just look at the answer Jesus gave to the woman who had been suffering for 12 years, he said “your faith has saved you.” Just look at the answer Jesus gave the father of the 12-year old girl “do not be afraid, just have faith.” If you want to have life, have faith.

You could say that death is the opposite of life. And again, I repeat, ‘God did not create death.’ God wants everyone to succeed. God wants everyone to go to heaven. God created us in His image so that we can enjoy life here on earth. We can choose life or we can choose death, it’s our choice.

- He fashioned all things that they might have being – being, a creature with endless possibilities, a unique being with specific gifts and talents that were made just for you.
- He fashioned all things that they might be wholesome – wholesome, a life complete and full.
- God did not put a destructive drug among us – He put no natural elements within us naturally that would harm us.
- God did not set up shop for Satan here on earth – He did not desire for us to suffer temptations.

It is God’s plan that we are unique beings, wholesome, free from addictions, and free from Satan’s temptations. That is God’s plan, but our plans are not always God’s plans. Jesus came so that we might have life, but we have to grab that life, we have to see that life, we have to want that life, we have to desire that life – if you want to have life, have faith.

Do we seek life on our own or do we seek life with Jesus? Life on our own can be called life-taking; trying to grab what belongs to us; sucking the life out of others for our own pleasure. We don’t automatically think to be life-giving. It’s against human nature to resist the temptation to build yourself up, to build your own kingdom. Adam and Eve experienced it in the garden when they thought that the forbidden fruit would make them more powerful. St. Paul talked about it when he lamented that he tended to do the

harmful things when he knew the goodness that should be done. How do you recognize when your life is more harmful than good; how to be life-giving?

It first hit me when my first child was born. At any point in your life when you see the beauty of creation, the love of God for His creatures, and then; God has entrusted you, made you His steward of creation, anyone has to be blown away by the immensity of that situation. The situation where the creator of the universe loves each of us so much – and each life is so important to Him and to us – I have no choice but to be compelled to give back – to be life-giving, to give the light of Christ in me to everyone. That's what God wants, He wants everyone to succeed, He wants everyone to go to heaven. God created us in His image so that we can enjoy life here on earth. We can choose life or we can choose death, it's our choice.

God gave me a 56 Chevy once to watch, but my son – that's stepping it up a notch.

Jesus showed us how to be life-giving. The world says life is for us so that we can live – Jesus gave so that others could live. That is how I am called to live my life for my son, my children, my wife, my family, all of God's children. I don't have the luxury to live a life where I am comfortable when my child needs attention – he needs to know right from wrong, good from bad, how to be compassionate, charitable, loving to his neighbor, forgiving, the value in praising God. Once we bring a new life into this world, we have to be thinking about the kingdom of God. That goes for all people, not just our children. We have to give, we have to be life-giving, to build the kingdom so that all people will have life, life to the fullest. All people are created to have life to the fullest.

In our gospel story, the father thought he had lost his 12 year old girl – 12 years is significant because that is when young people in that time became of age to start families. Yes, the physical death was devastating but also the potential for life was gone too. All of their dreams, joys, suffering together, pains of a new life to be shared. The synagogue official threw out concerns for his position and social status, the things of this world because real life was at stake here. He would associate with the rebel Jesus because he was now in search of real life – life where relationships are built, you care about each other, we work together to build the kingdom of God.

Maybe you don't have that life right now. Maybe you are more of a life-taker, not a life-giver. Many people think that God punishes for bad behavior. God is not a punishing God. You may experience unpleasant consequences for your bad behavior. That is your own doing. Even if you don't see punishment for your bad behavior, in those circumstances, you are not experiencing life either. God's only desire is to pull you from darkness into light. Just like the woman afflicted with hemorrhages who reached for just the cloak of Jesus for healing, you can reach out to Jesus in your need for conversion. Ask Jesus – who in your life, just like when I saw my new son – what beautiful creation from God in your life, needs to see the light of Christ from you. You can give so that others can live.