

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 1, 2018
Fr. Rick Lorenz

Reflection

I recently saw a well-known parishioner from my last church. She came to Holy Redeemer for the pro-life Mass. About three years ago, she was struck by a car in her home country of Trinidad. Her survival was a close shave. She was immobile for months. Week after week, her name was on the list of the sick. Friends requested Masses for her recovery. And then one week it was reported that she had died. People were saddened when they heard her name during the prayers of the faithful; saddened and shocked. One lady said, "I just spoke to her yesterday!" Well, it turns out that someone had written her name on the wrong list. "O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol, restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit." She came back to Canada, still immobile, but very much alive. Volunteers brought her communion, and physiotherapists aided her recovery. She had a good laugh when I told her about the mistake...of course she already knew about it. Eventually, she could move her legs again, and then she could stand, and then she could walk. One day she re-appeared in church. Now she looks ten years younger, still with her walker, still with her smile.

In today's Gospel, the people didn't make a mistake. They said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" The natural signs were clear.

Wis 1:13-15; 2:23-24
Ps 30
2 Cor 8:7, 9, 13-15
Mk 5:21-43

The commotion, the weeping and the loud wailing all point to the fact that the little girl had died. Just to be sure, the catechism includes the miracle with the resuscitations of Lazarus and the young man from Naim (646). The little girl was dead. But in his divinity, Jesus has a knowledge of life and death that exceeds the bounds of nature; knowledge, authority and power. He is righteousness and "righteousness is immortal." Therefore, love lives. "God created man for incorruption," and the Ascension of Jesus brought a glorious incorruptible human nature into divinity. Love lives, and hope grows. God made man "in the image of his own eternity," and Jesus is co-eternal with the Father. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25)." He, and only he, could breathe words of life and hope: "Do not fear, only believe; the child is not dead but sleeping; little girl, get up." He lived, died, and lives again, bringing an inheritance of life eternal to those who believe. Love lives, hope grows, and faith is what saves.

Jesus accomplished what these virtues promise. So we follow him to what he prepares for us in heaven. He leads us to acceptance: acceptance of his word, which gives us belief; acceptance of his commands, which give us a path; and acceptance of physical death, which opens the door to colour beyond colour. It completes our baptism, where we begin to die to ourselves, so that we can live only for God.

Death is God calling us home, so those who suffer are right to want it, anticipating heaven with loving obedience and thankful patience. That was the response of Jesus to the cross we gave him, and it's our response to the cross that he helps us bear. St. Therese of Lisieux suffered before us, and she left us these words: "I am not dying, I am entering life (1011)." Until God ends our pilgrimage on earth, we accept his grace and mercy. These allow us to follow his plan and decide our destiny. Until then, Mary helps us prepare at the two most important moments of our lives: "Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of death. Amen."