

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time Year B  
June 26-27, 2021

*God did not make death*

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

Our first reading begins with a simple declarative sentence, the meaning of which is difficult to dispute. “God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living.” The statement begs a follow-up question. Who did make death, Lord?” From where did it come? The question isn’t disrespectful; it’s honest. Death is the wages of sin.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus truly suffered on the cross, knowing of his imminent death. Most do not have such a knowledge of particulars. In death, we are surrounded and shrouded in mystery. By his death, Christ experienced this further element of our humanity; he surrendered himself in the most complete way, becoming one with us even in the loss of the preternatural gifts of Adam and Eve. These special privileges before the fall included infused knowledge, absence of concupiscence, and bodily immortality.

Their knowledge was clear, not marred by selfishness nor damaged by sinful desires; they would not suffer the tendency toward sin that plagues us. I still think the cartoon from ca. 1970 showing the angel on one shoulder and the devil on the other taught a great lesson to kids about just such a tendency to sin. Finally, and above all- they were not to experience bodily death. All this was forfeited in the Fall, not just for them, but for all humanity.

When we die, we must be “away from the body and at home with the Lord.” (2 Cor. 5:8). We Catholics believe that when we die, our body is separated from the soul until the end of time, at which point the soul and body will be reunited in the final resurrection. Our faith teaches this, and yet we ourselves often remain afraid of death. I neither enjoy thinking about death, nor do I get excited when preaching about it. But, if I am true to my vocation, I cannot cherry pick the Church’s teaching.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Romans 6:23

Our Faith teaches us that “It is in regard to death that man's condition is most shrouded in doubt.”<sup>2</sup> But doubt does not have to paralyze us. And fear needn't grab hold of us. Rather, it is a reality that death is a consequence of sin. It was not what God intended for us; this is the crux of our first reading. God's plan was interrupted by our sin; but it will not be defeated. Death does not have the last word. It is a step towards God, an entrance to everlasting life.

[We live each day for God. In the Eucharistic prayer today, we will hear: “So that from the rising of the sun until its setting, a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.” Indeed, it will and has for nearly 180 years in this parish. From the dedication Mass celebrated in a rustic log cabin by Father Lucien Galtier on the Feast of All Saints Day in 1841, until today<sup>3</sup>, the Sacrifice of the Mass has been offered in this very church or her predecessors to the praise and glory of God.]

We continue to praise and glory to God until such time as he calls us home- not on our schedule but on his. Listen to this funeral prayer:<sup>4</sup>  
“Go forth, Christian soul, from this world  
in the name of God the almighty Father, who created you,  
in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God,  
who suffered for you, in the name of the Holy Spirit,  
who was poured out upon you.  
Go forth, faithful Christian!  
May you live in peace this day,  
may your home be with God in Zion,  
with Mary, the virgin Mother of God,  
with Joseph, and all the angels and saints....”

Let us pray for the grace to approach the Lord with the same spirit that motivated Jairus, not a spirit of fear or desperation, but one of hope and trust. “Do not be afraid; just have faith.”

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<sup>2</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. # 1006

<sup>3</sup> 65,618 days later!

<sup>4</sup> Order of Christian Funerals, Prayer of Commendation.