

June 30 XIII Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today's readings speak of the gift of life, both physical and spiritual, that God has given us. They urge and challenge us to be grateful for our health in body and soul and to use God's gifts of life and health responsibly.

The first reading, taken from the Book of Wisdom, tells us that God gave us life and health, and that it was the jealousy of the Satan that produced illness and death. The reading also suggests that God's intent for our lives on earth is that we be able to know, to love, and to serve God here, with perfect health in body and soul, and to share His Immortal Life forever. The Responsorial Psalm (Ps 30) celebrates Christ's victory over death. The Psalm refrain, "I will praise you Lord, for You have rescued me ", allows us to join the Psalm in thanksgiving.

In the second reading, St. Paul asks the Corinthian Christian community to show to their suffering, starving Jewish brothers and sisters in Jerusalem, living in poverty and sickness, the same generous kindness and compassion Jesus showed in healing all who came, believing, to ask. The generosity of Jesus is the central theme here also, for Paul describes Jesus' life, death and Resurrection as "the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ," as a motive for generous giving.

Today's Gospel describes two of our Lord's miracles, the healing of a woman who suffered from a chronic bleeding disease and the returning of the dead daughter of Jairus to life. These healings show us that, like God described in Wisdom today, Jesus wills life, and wills full life for all God's children, and wields Divine power and the Infinite Mercy as our Savior. These miracles were worked by Jesus as reward for the trusting Faith of a synagogue ruler and of a woman with a hemorrhage. Although the Faith of the ruler may have been defective, and the woman's Faith may have been a bit superstitious, Jesus amply rewarded the Faith they had by granting them health and life.

1: We need to accept God's call to health, wholeness, and holiness. Jesus accepts us as we are. Hence, let us bring our bodily illnesses and spiritual wounds to Jesus for healing. We should pray for healing which will give us spiritual and physical health in every aspect of our lives, so that we may function in perfect harmony with the Will of God, with the people around us, and with the environment. As Christians, we believe that Jesus continues to heal us through human instruments in the medical profession, like doctors, nurses, and medical technicians. Hence,

when we go to a doctor, we need to offer a prayer to Christ, the Divine Healer, that we may choose the right doctor, who will make the correct diagnosis, prescribe the correct treatment, and give us the correct medicine. Let us not forget the truth that, over, above, and beyond the ability and skill of the greatest human healer, Christ still works wonders of healing. Let us also thank God for the great gift of health and use it for helping those who are sick.

2: We need to continue the healing mission of the Church: As members of the Church, we are not excused from our vocation to be healers. When a friend of ours is terminally ill, the skill of the doctors and their advanced medical tools often become powerless. What the patient needs in such a situation is our care, concern, and prayerful presence, enabling them to experience through us the love, compassion, and mercy of Jesus. We do our share of Christ's healing mission by visiting the sick, by praying for their healing, and by boosting their morale through our loving presence, encouragement, support, and inspiration. I take this opportunity to appreciate all the Homebound Ministers in our Parish headed by Ms. Brenda and supported by Dn. John. They are doing a wonderful job and by the grace of God I was able to be of help to them these two years.

3: We need to have trusting Faith in the mercy and Divine power of Jesus: The primary condition for the effectiveness of our prayer is our Faith in the goodness and mercy of God. Such a Faith is possible only if we remain related to God through prayer, the Sacraments, and a meditative study of the Bible. Every day we should say a fervent prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gift of active Faith. Let us keep in mind this wise piece of advice given by St. Ignatius of Loyola: "We must work as if everything depends on us, but we must pray as if everything depends on God."