



**Contributed by Brother John, C.R.**

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## **THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**June 27th, 2021**

### **GATHERING TIME**

*(10-15 minutes)*

#### **Introduction to the Word:**

So how have you been coping during our pandemic brought on by the COVID-19 virus? Or, to be more specific, how have you managed with the resulting restrictions? The past fourteen to fifteen months have been challenging for everyone, putting stress on relationships, mobility, finances, and emotional health. I know I have felt lethargic during the past few weeks as this 'new normal' oozed into yet another month, and especially when unseasonably cold wet weather followed a refreshingly warm and invigorating beginning to spring. My spirits were dashed and I wanted to blame my few extra pounds on the lack of energy and despondency that got fed by snacking. All of which only added to my downed spirit. Fortunately, when a group of us were meeting for some faith sharing, the words of scripture struck a chord. My attention was caught by the words from Jesus: 'You did not choose me but I chose you'. As often I have read this passage, prayed on it and moved on, this time it hit my depressed spirit and I wanted it to just sink deeper into my heart. I had to stay with the message and let 'valued, worthy, and intimate' wash through me. That inner empty spot reacted to the spark of love and expelled the self pity and feeling of aloneness.

Faith in God's word and openness to the Spirit has a way of bringing new hope. And we see wonderful examples of faith and hope in today's scriptures.

**Warm-up Activity** (about 8-10 minutes):

- a) When you have felt despondent or depressed?
- b) Have you experienced feeling alone in a group, or unworthy?
- c) Who or what was helpful or not? Did scripture or prayer become a resource?

**The Table of the Word**

**RELATIONSHIPS**

In the chapter preceding today's second reading Saint Paul asks, "What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?" (1 Cor. 4:7). We will read and hear Paul developing this theme to the people of Corinth, presenting a vision of what the Christian Community can and ought to be. Paul's vision includes the generous sharing of the gifts and talents received from God, strengthening and building up the faith, all for the good of the Community. Paul's vision for the Christian Community calls each of us to realize that all I have, and all that I am, is pure gift from God, given with the expectation that it will be shared and not hidden under a bushel. Pope Francis, (in *The Joy of the Gospel*, paragraph 53) speaks about the need for a fair balance between abundance and need. "Just as the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say 'thou shalt not' to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality."

**Leader: We turn to the Lord seeking the strength to stand against the darkness of sin.**

<b>Lord Jesus,</b> for the strength to say no to the devil's envy,	<b>Lord have mercy.</b>
<b>Christ Jesus,</b> for the grace to seek the light rather than the dark,	<b>Christ, have mercy.</b>
<b>Lord Jesus,</b> for the hope that comes from faith in God.	<b>Lord, have mercy.</b>

*Let us Pray*

**O God, who through the grace of adoption chose us to be children of light,  
grant, we pray, that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error  
but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth.**

**We pray this through Jesus, who is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.**

**SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME** (45 minutes)

(As Christians we believe that the **WORD** of God we hear proclaimed each Sunday is an empowering Word, and that God is present in the Word proclaimed. This is the Word that God wants us to hear today. The dynamic of the Small Christian Community, namely, reflecting on our life-story within the context of this Word, and sharing the insights of these reflections, is such that God's Spirit becomes present, and the gifts of the Spirit are experienced as empowering and life-giving. Because it is a privileged time it is incumbent on us in the small group to proclaim God's Word with due reverence, to be attentive to this proclamation, and respectful of the communal interaction. The facilitator has arranged for group members to proclaim the three readings.)

## **FIRST READING** (Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24)

God did not make death, and he does not delight in the death of the living. For he created all things so that they might exist; the generative forces of the world are wholesome, and there is no destructive poison in them, and the dominion of Hades is not on earth. For righteousness is immortal.

For God created man for incorruption, and made him in the image of his own eternity, but through the devil's envy death entered the world, and those who belong to his company experience it.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## **SECOND READING** (2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15)

Brothers and sisters: Now as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you – so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. As it is written, “The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.”

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL** (Mark 5:21-43)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

When Jesus had crossed in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. Then one of the synagogue leaders named Jairus came and, when he saw Jesus, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.” So Jesus went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.

Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’” He looked all around to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. Jesus said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe."

Jesus allowed no one to follow him. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. Then Jesus put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about for she was twelve years of age. At this they were overcome with amazement. Jesus strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Lectio Divina** means "sacred reading." It was a popular form of prayer in the early Church. This Word proclaimed today is God's own Word, God's way of speaking to you today through his own Spirit. So take a few moments to be quiet, allowing this Word you have just heard to touch you as you reflect quietly on the three readings. Is there a word or thought that somehow attracts you or has your interest? If so, simply identify it – no need to explain it – just identify it.

## **COMMENTARY:**

The book of Wisdom, sometimes referred to as Wisdom of Solomon, is believed to have been written between 250 BCE – 50 CE in Egypt. Its author wrote to counter Hellenistic culture, which viewed religion as a social function. The Greeks believed in many gods, each overseeing different aspects of life. But the author of Wisdom advocated a personal relationship with God who did not intend death and that there is a connection between morality and eternity. The ungodly may oppress the godly but eventually they will perish and be put to shame. The doctrine of resurrection was promoted as opposed to the Hellenistic thought of fatalism based upon the whims of the gods.

Paul encourages the Corinthians to be generous as they have been blessed in their quality of life, plus Paul's love for them. The basis for this is Christ's love, his example of becoming poor for our sake so that we may become rich in his grace. Paul's invitation is to freely share from our abundance so as to help alleviate another's need. This model of equality involves a sharing of pain and joy as well as poverty and wealth.

Mark's gospel paints a story of contrasts and similarities, and of deliverance and restoration. Jesus is surrounded by a large crowd, but the focus moves to two singular individuals, very different but of similar determination. The synagogue leader is a person of status in the community and would have a title and privilege. Presumably he would be wealthy and not comfortable begging.

But he is desperate, pleading, and because of his daughter, he makes a formal request of Jesus, begging at his feet. The woman, on the other hand, is fearful and approaches Jesus from behind. She is timid, and very possibly has a low opinion of herself simply because she is female in that society—but more so because of her bleeding. Her condition designates her as unclean, to be

avoided. She was rejected due to the purity laws of her religion; she was poor, with no status, and did not make a request. And she has no name!

Jesus' reactions and his example are a condensed Good News lesson. His response to each person is immediate and an expression of a desire to help. His actions contravene society's standards regarding a person's status; He does not choose one urgent, sudden need over a long-endured chronic condition; age is not a determining factor. And what is his response to his disciples and also to the mourning crowd at the synagogue leader's house?

The teaching today is Jesus' view of restrictive customs and purity codes. His life reinterpreted (and even changed) customs, and opposed blindly following laws. Correct relationships, compassion and justice are based upon God's love, a love that is unconditional and always a promise of hope.

(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)

## **Questions for Reflection and Discussion:**

### **Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24** *“God did not make death”*

Wisdom makes clear in just a few brief sentences that death is not from God, nor does God find any delight or pleasure in death. Wisdom is referring to the death that comes when one alienates themselves from God, freely choosing darkness over light, a spiritual death.

- a) What do you think might cause someone to freely alienate themselves from God?
- b) What could the result of this action be? Can they return to God?

### **2 Corinthians 8:7-9, 13-15** *“It is a question of a fair balance”*

Saint Paul exhorts the Corinthians to strive for a fair balance between abundance and need.

- a) Is this vision of the world possible? Do you see some present-day examples?
- b) Is this attitude present in your life, family, and church?

### **Mark 5:21-43** *“Do not fear, only believe”*

Two amazing miracles, both of which are the result of faith: faith in the power of Jesus to heal and bring forth new life.

- a) What examples do you know of similar faith?
- b) What common situations or events call to you to exercise understanding and compassion?

## **CARING-PRAYING TIME** (15-20 minutes)

1. **Word of the Week:** *“I will extol you O Lord, for you have raised me up.” Ps.30*

2. **Suggestion for the Week:**

Spend some time this week continuing to pray and reflect upon Jesus' actions. He is not only a helper and healer but restores life; His mission is restoration and salvation. How may He be inviting you to influence new life and new hope in those whom you meet?

**3. Intercessions:** (Response: **Lord, hear our prayer**)

**Leader:** Believing in the power of Jesus to heal and bring forth new life, let us place our prayers into His hands ...

**For leaders, civil and religious,** that they would act as true shepherds of compassion and justice for those entrusted to their care, we pray ...

**For those who are struggling and suffering hardships;** may the knowledge and awareness of the blessings that God has showered upon them bring them hope and renewed strength, we pray...

**For the times** when we encounter despair and fear we may recall your Spirit within so that our actions will bear witness to that Presence, we pray...

**May we imitate** the generous acts of Jesus and share our abundance of gifts and blessings freely with those in need, we pray ...

**In thanksgiving for healing.** May we not only acknowledge the power of Jesus to heal all physical and spiritual illnesses, but be truly thankful for this great grace in our world, we pray...

**For families** as they encounter the conflicting values of our culture; may they be guided and directed by your Spirit, we pray...

**For the strength to rise from sin.** May we freely place our need for forgiveness from sin into God's hands, believing beyond all doubt that God will forgive us and raise us to new life, we pray ...

**That those who have died** may enjoy the full hope and promise of the resurrection, especially those most near and dear to us, we pray ...

**How can we help you in prayer this week?**

Let us pray (together)

**O God, may the sacrifice Jesus so freely offered for us  
fill us with new life and hope,  
so that this free gift may be received with fullness of heart  
and may bear fruit for others in how we live our lives.  
We pray this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God's favors on us today, we pray that all those in our influence may be moved to be open to your Word and your Spirit, while we pray as one, OUR FATHER ...**

**THIS IS OUR LAST PUBLICATION UNTIL WE BEGIN AGAIN WITH THE SEPTEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup> ISSUE. LOOK FOR THE SEPTEMBER ISSUES TO BE POSTED ON THE WEBSITE AND TRANSMITTED AS USUAL IN MID-AUGUST. MAY THE RISEN LORD BLESS ALL OF YOU AND GIVE YOU A PEACEFUL AND RESTFUL SUMMER! PLEASE STAY SAFE AND HEALTHY!**

Celebrating the Word, Resurrection Ministries of the Congregation of the Resurrection Ontario-Kentucky Province (including the former Resurrection Centre), 265 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G7. (Celebrating the Word was founded by Father Frank Ruetz, C.R., deceased 2012). For information: Website [www.resurrectionists.ca](http://www.resurrectionists.ca) or provincial [office@resurrectioncollege.ca](mailto:office@resurrectioncollege.ca) The Scripture version used in this commentary is the New Revised Standard Version (copyrighted by the National Council of the Churches of