

Thirteenth Sunday Ordinary time-B. July 1, 2018

The Book of Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24. Psalm 30:2,4, 5-6,11,12,13. 2 Corinthians 8:7,9, 13-15. Mark 5:21-43

HOMILY, Fr. Ed Hislop

This prayer of Pope Francis echoes through our world today:
“All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.” Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.” From concluding prayer Pope Francis *Laudato Si, Prayer for Our Earth* page 56

The word of the living God, just proclaimed in our midst today reminds us that we—all of us—in every time, place, circumstance and way of life, have been formed in the image of this creator God with imperishable life as our destiny. Our shared breath is the breath of God flowing in and out of us that we may protect life and beauty, harming no one, willing to live as sisters and brothers rescuing the abandoned, so precious in the eyes of God.

Today, in the midst of all that is happening in our world and country, all the ridicule, division, blaming, wailing, and fear of the “other,” we encounter Jesus again having crossed in the boat to “the other side,” not content, it would seem, to remain in the place he was. A crossing perhaps, we can all identify with particularly during these days when so many are “crossing to the other side.”

Standing by the vastness and beauty of the sea of Tiberius, reflecting the mystery of life beyond ordinary expectations and presumptions, a powerful, influential and privileged man named Jairus throws himself at Jesus’ feet, pleading for mercy, “bring healing to my child...” “pour out the power of love that life and beauty may be

protected,” words echoed today also by poor and homeless parents.

Children have a way of breaking the barriers of division, and “indifference and freeing the many from the insensitivity born of worldly comfort and self-centeredness.”

Still “on the other side,” standing by the vastness and beauty of the sea, a woman with no name, a person on the “margins” of the community, a victim of her ailment and of those who attempted to “heal her;” her “self-worth” depleted due to the meanness and judgement of “the many,” boldly violates both the social and religious prohibitions of her day and “crosses over to the other side.” She deliberately touches Jesus--she reaches out on her own accord and snatches the power of God. She risked everything in her journey, as so many have done today. Her trust, hope, and faith brings healing to her life.

Both the woman and the man “cross to the other side” out of faith and a relentless hope and nothing or no one can stop them! They do not choose fear. They choose faith! They do not choose death, they choose life; they do not choose despair, they choose hope!

Both the sick child of the privileged man and the woman on the margins, were considered to be “unclean,” untouchable, almost inhuman in the social, religious and legal values of their day—“they were outside the circle of acceptability:” the woman because of her ailment and the girl because of her sickness, could not, in the eyes of that community, contribute to its future.

The people gathered at the home of Jairus, were making a great commotion of “weeping and wailing,” “why bother?” they counseled; and they laughed at Jesus, ridiculing him for the radical change he proposed, opposing him for the “love

of neighbor” he both demonstrated and demanded; they worried about a house being built “*where love can dwell and all can safely live.*”

Their prayer could not have echoed the prayer of Pope Francis: “*Pour out upon us the power of your love that we may protect life... Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.*” They would not hear those amazing words of Jesus: “Do not fear, only believe.”

The people there chose fear, rather than faith; separation rather than the work of building a house “where the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God’s face.” But the ones rejected and turned away, the woman on the margins of the community, and the father for the sake of his child, chose to believe rather than to be afraid and like Jesus in the boat, “crossed to the other side” seeking a house “where all are named, their songs and visions heard and lived and treasured, taught and claimed...”

These are not stories of yesteryear told of days long past, they are told for and of us in these days.

At the Lord’s Table, because of what we do, and because of what is done to us we become together the one of whom we eat and drink.

We must, then, become the community whom those “on the other side” boldly want to touch and “find healing and acceptance.” We are the ones who are to be the healing touch of Jesus, the people who in the midst of all the commotion of wailing, shouting, blaming ridiculing and divisions, choose to take the hand of every lost child, saying, “little girl get up,” let us take you home, and give you something to eat.

We are being touched, and we must take the hand of the other, letting the words of Jesus become our own, ingrained deep in our heart and every fiber of our being: “**Do not fear, only believe.**”

Then the prayer of Pope Francis becomes our own: “*Bring healing to our lives, teach us to discover the worth of each person....Let us be filled with awe and contemplation... Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love*” and a house where “all are welcome.”

THE BOAT AWAITS US, READY TO CROSS AGAIN TO THE OTHER SIDE, WHERE THE OUTCAST AND THE STRANGER BEAR THE IMAGE OF GOD’S FACE.



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Sources: The Scripture of the 13th Sunday B Ordinary time.
Pope Francis, Prayer for our Earth, Laudato Si, Concluding Prayer page 56.
All are Welcome, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications.