

Chaplain's Bulletin June 30, 2024



Dear Folks,

Our Scriptures today deal with the forces of life and the forces of death. “Because God did not make death, nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living (Wisdom 1:13; see also Ezekiel 1:23).”

In our Gospel, the story of the woman with the hemorrhage is sandwiched between two halves of the story of raising the daughter of Jairus. In Leviticus 17:11 we see that, “the life of the flesh is in the blood.” For the Israelites, the blood was the life, so her life was draining away. She was ritually impure, so she could not enter the temple, and no one wanted to touch her because they would become ritually impure themselves. Imagine being isolated from life like that for 12 years. The little girl was 12 years old (another hint that the stories are connected). She had so little chance to experience life, and now it seemed that she never would. The heartbreak of her family would be incalculable. Jesus brings hope when hope is gone.

Of course, there would be many sick and dying people at that time that did not get cured. Jesus of course, had great concern for all who suffered, but His primary task was not to increase people’s lifespan, but give us eternal life. When He does miracles, He is teaching us something.

In one sense, we are either alive or we are not. A human life is immeasurably sacred and precious, worthy of unique respect. It would be appalling for a society to say that the life of an adult was more sacred than the life of a teenager, that the life of a teenager was more sacred than the life of a toddler, or that the life of a toddler was more sacred than the life of a fetus.

In another sense, we can become more fully alive by how we exercise our humanity. To give in to the forces of chaos, to be enslaved to our primal desires, to think only of ourselves, to let life happen to us is to be less alive. To give ourselves in love to others, to devote our energies to something greater than ourselves, to be intentional about growing and developing as a person is to be more fully alive.

Living things can grow, organize, often connect with others to form communities that are somewhat like a live organism (1 Corinthians 12). Dead things decompose, return to the earth, and their material disperses. W. C. Fields is quoted as saying, “Remember, a dead fish can float downstream, but it takes a live one to swim upstream.” Being alive enables us to resist the forces of chaos.

The great obstacle to being fully alive is sin. Remember that “The devil was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44).” And in Romans 6:23, “the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life.” Jesus came that we “might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).” If we are to spread the Gospel, it is for us to show that we are leading an abundant life, one that, while challenging, is joyful, even in difficult times. How do you see your life as more abundant because it belongs to Jesus?

Blessings,
Fr. Jim