

Father O'Connor's Homily
30 June 2024
Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time-B

Wisdom 1: 13-15; 2: 23-24
2 Corinthians 8: 7, 9, 13-15
Mark 5: 21-43

Today is the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time. What does this expression mean? In the calendar of the Church year, "ordinary" is used in two senses: 1) it is "the usual time," "the ordinary time" of the year, outside the Advent-Christmas seasons and the Lent-Easter seasons; 2) it is marked not by cardinal numbers – like "thirteen," but by ordinal numbers – like the "thirteenth" Sunday today.

The vestment color for Ordinary Time is green: a symbol of life and of hope. All the green grass and plants and trees are full of life and inspire us to be full of hope.

"Trust in God" features in the Scripture readings today for this Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time. As we look back over our lives and see how God has protected us, we have every good reason to place our trust in Him today. That is what we prayed in today's Responsorial Psalm [from Psalm 30]: "I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me."

We either live lives trusting in God or, as Henry David Thoreau puts it, "we live lives of quiet desperation." Trust in God is the virtue we need to cultivate to carry us through the ups and the downs of ordinary daily life.

Charles Colson was associated with Watergate, went to prison, had a conversion, and died in 2012. In his speaking ministry he told a story about a man who was a workaholic and was literally falling apart.

His wife accompanied him to see the doctor. The doctor told the man that he was physically exhausted and critically ill. He prescribed six months away from work, resting at home.

The doctor then wanted to talk with the man's wife, alone. He told her that she had an essential part to play in his recovery. She needed to see that he got all the rest he could, prepare all the foods that he enjoyed, wait on him as much as possible, not argue with him, and make life at home as peaceful and as pleasant as she could. If she didn't, the doctor said that her husband would not have long to live.

On the way home, the man asked his wife what the doctor had told her. She answered, "The doctor said you are going to die."

The Bible teaches us again and again that we often add to our own stresses in life by failing to trust in God and His promises.

The most powerful words for me in today's Gospel are when the people come to Jairus, the synagogue official, and tell him, "Your daughter has died. Why trouble the teacher any longer?" And then Jesus says to Jairus, "Do not be afraid. Just have faith."

In spite of all the appearances, Jesus tells that father to trust in Him and not be afraid. Then Jesus goes with Jairus to his house and raises his twelve-year-old daughter to life. And Jesus, aware of even the smallest details, tells her astonished parents that they should give the girl something to eat.

We all need regular blessed assurance from Jesus. We know what it is like to be anxious and fearful, to feel overwhelmed and helpless. But Jesus is with us right now as we gather in His name to pray, as we listen to His Word, as we prepare to receive Him in Holy Communion. And Jesus reassures all of us anxious ones: "Do not be afraid. Just have faith."

There is a hymn that sums up this message. It is entitled "Abide with Me." The words were written in 1847 by an Anglican clergyman, Henry F. Lyte [1793-1847], and the melody was composed by William Henry Monk [1823-1889]. Lyte wrote this hymn text while he was suffering from tuberculosis and he died several weeks after finishing it.

The hymn is a prayer asking God to remain with us throughout our life, through our trials, and through our death. The opening line alludes to the two disciples who, unknowingly, encounter the Risen Christ on the road to Emmaus and beg Him: "Stay with us. It is nearly evening. The day is practically over" [Luke 24: 29]. He stays and has supper with them. And they recognize Him in the Breaking of the Bread. "Stay with us. Abide with us."

We will sing this hymn today during the Preparation of the Gifts. [If you would like to use this hymn text for your personal reflection later, it is #638 in the **Breaking Bread Hymnal**.]

Listen now to the text of the first verse of "Abide with Me":

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens, Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

On this 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Jesus reassures us: “Do not be afraid. Just have faith.”

And with trust we can reply to Him: “Help of the helpless, O abide with me.”