

FR. PETER'S HOMILY  
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

"God did not make death," the author of the Book of Wisdom declares; "God formed man to be imperishable."

So where did death come from?

"By the envy of the devil, death entered the world, and they who belong to his company experience it."

The reading from the Book of Wisdom was chosen by the Church to compliment the account of the raising of Jairus' daughter [as well as the healing of the woman with a hemorrhage].

Jesus is the fulfillment of God's creative will, exercising power over sickness ... even over death itself.

When Jesus arrives at the house of Jairus notice that he states: "The child is not dead, but asleep."

Jesus says the same about Lazarus in the Gospel according to John: "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him."

For those who believe in Jesus, death is not the final word. Jesus assures us:

"I am the resurrection and the life: If you believe in me, even though you die, yet shall you live."

And so he challenges Jairus, "Do not be afraid; just have faith."

To the child Jesus says: "Little girl, I tell you, arise!"

In the Letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul quotes an ancient baptismal hymn: "Awake, O sleeper, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

Through baptism and faith in Christ, we belong to the company of Jesus; we have renounced the devil, and all his works, and all his empty promises.

Having been saved by Jesus, we have the promise of eternal life, for "death no longer holds power over us."

All this is possible because of "the gracious act" of Jesus Christ referred to by St. Paul in today's second reading.

Paul writes: "though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."

As Son of God, Jesus was rich, but by taking on human flesh he became poor.

This poverty of Jesus was fully manifested by his self-emptying upon the Cross.

Because Jesus was willing to accept death, you and I have become rich because the promise of eternal life has been given to us.

And so, through Jesus the Christ, God has fulfilled his original intention for humanity.

This is the "Good News," the "Kerygma," the heart of our faith, which gives us hope so that we can love courageously.

Freed from the fear of death, we are challenged to be bold in living our lives as disciples of Jesus.

St. Paul is writing this to the Corinthians to inspire them to participate in a collection to help the struggling Christian community in Jerusalem.

As Christ has been generous to the Corinthians - bestowing upon them the promise of eternal life - so they should be generous towards others.

Generosity goes hand in hand with being a disciple.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your faithful stewardship, especially in our weekly collection.

And I want to thank all of you who have pledged so generously to the Catholic Services Appeal.

The great news is that we have made our goal, so all future pledges will become money returned to the parish.

There is still time to make your pledge if you have not yet done so.

Your participation will support many ministries in our parish, our diocese, and throughout the world-wide Church.

Together, we will continue to proclaim the Good News that Christ has conquered sin and death.