

Homily June 30 2024 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B

Wisdom 1:1, 4-5a, 6-7; 12-15; 2:23;;Psalm 36; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, 7, 9, 12b-15; Mark 5:21-43

Shortly after I turned 19, I was in a weekend marriage preparation course in Edmonton. At that time the Church insisted that the non-Catholic spouse agree to raising in the Catholic faith, any children who came along. My background was the United Church with a mother who was steeped in anticatholic fundamentalist tenents from her association with the Alliance Church. We, her children, heard many times how NOT to be Catholic. Here I was, a firm believer with an intimate prayerful relationship with my God, being asked to do exactly what I felt was wrong theologically, fundamentally for the sake of my upcoming marriage. It took some time, and quiet prayer that weekend, but in a brave decision, driven by love for Vincent, and trust that my own faith in God would prevail, I let go my hold on anti-Catholicism and sacrificed my need to be right for the unknown. I said Yes. It was an opening to the Spirit by the Spirit and has been a fruitful journey into the Eucharist, social justice, healing prayer and ultimately now, priesthood. I look back and can see that that was a very generous act for a young woman set in

her ways. I have a memory of physically feeling that I broke through something in that act of selflessness.

The first reading instructs that we desire justice with the integrity of heart, that we seek wisdom that dwells in our very body. Richard Wagamese in the Prayer for Wholeness today tells us this may be done with silence. We let the busyness of thoughts give way to an inner quiet. We pay attention to the courage and perseverance of our inner self.

In the early Church in Macedonia, *Land of the Tall People*, Paul reports that “The gift of Creator’s great kindness has taken hold of their hearts.” The Spirit brought about a generosity of selflessness that the Macedonian community freed up what they did have and let go, in order that those struggling under a Great Famine in Jerusalem receive financial aid for food. Their giving comes from a freedom that was initiated by the Spirit of Christ. An offering for another whose need is greater.

When Jesus insists on finding the person who touched him in that crowd pressing in on him, I think he wanted her to know that what she took from him for herself, the power to heal her chronic bleeding, while

an act of faith on her part, was sourced from within him and freely given to her. And that place of the heart is generous, kindly, and most of all, desiring of her healing. Coming out that day with the truth of her story made a connection with him that opened this struggling woman to freedom and Wisdom deeper than what she could imagine. The spirit in her, connected to the Spirit in him, the living Word.

I wondered what facilitates such life and life-giving choices? In my case it was love for another and trust in God. When Jairus receives news of his dead daughter, the Greek phrase the gospel writer assigns to Jesus words is the present imperative, “just keep on believing.” Jairus came to him in an act of faith and he then he was encouraged by Jesus, *Creator Sets Free*, to persevere in that faith. Just like the woman with the hemorrhage persisted in her faith because she KNEW deep within, that she needed to reach out and touch his clothes, Jairus learned that his faith in Jesus’ power to heal could be expanded. Brendan Byrne says, his faith went beyond the asking for the healing of a “grave illness”, to now

“confront the fact of death itself.”¹ Both of these stories of women who are healed, the Comprehensive Catholic Lectionary notes mention, are testament to women as sure recipients of resurrection. Power and life were given freely to them to be effective ministers in body and soul.

What seems impossible and beyond all hope to us as thinkers *can* find a way through the heart, through our inner-dwelling wisdom which is released by perseverance in the way of quiet prayer. Silent prayer, when we just keep believing, gives way to selfless acts of compassion.

Turning to the quiet energy of Christ within our bodies can help us let go of hostilities and ways of seeing, like anti-Catholicism that are harmful, in order that doors open to new ways of being and seeing. May it be so.

Thank-you for listening.

In our breakout rooms, I invite you to share, when have you surprised yourself in a generous act of giving? Or what have you noticed in today’s readings and liturgy?

¹ Brendan Byrne, *A Costly Freedom: A Theological Reading of Mark’s Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press), 2008,102.