

# Pray: "LORD, INCREASE MY faith"



## Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,

As we gather on this **13th Sunday in Ordinary Time**, Jesus responds to the sickness and death of a young girl - the daughter of a synagogue official named Jairus. Sandwiched in the middle is the account of a woman who suffered twelve years from a painful, humiliating disease. Why does God allow such suffering? Ultimately, we have only one answer - that they would come to Jesus. To know Jesus is the greatest good which the Father can offer us. Apparently it would be worth twelve years, even twelve hundred years, of suffering simply to touch his cloak. And for the synagogue official, his terrible anguish vanished like mist when he heard those words, "*Talitha koum,*" that is, "*Little girl, I say to you, arise!*"

The Scottish writer, George MacDonald, asked why God allows suffering, why he sometimes seems so distant. He said: "*As cold as everything looks in winter, the sun has not forsaken us. He has only drawn away for a little, for good reasons, one of which is that we may learn that we cannot do without him.*" I am sure that those who live up north can identify with that quote. This past winter (and the year of COVID 19) it seemed like the sun would never return. But it did and we all can really appreciate it. Even when Jesus seems distant, he has not forsaken us. He will return.

It is easy for us humans to believe in tragedy; it is harder to believe in good news. But we have to realize that Jesus is like the prince. He has already come and has put an end to death. Our reading from the Book of Wisdom states that God did not make death. The argument is that God created the world good. Evil entered on account of human excess and the devil's envy, but the world itself is good. Take something as simple as grapes. They are sweet and they naturally ferment to make a wonderful drink. Human excess, however, can turn wine into something destructive and ugly - but the wine itself is good. According to many environmentalists, human excess may destroy our entire planet. I don't know if the theories are true, but I do know this: God made the world good - and part of that goodness is our human freedom. Unfortunately, we have misused our freedom and, spurred on by the devil's evil, we have made a mess of things.

There is only one who can set things right. Only one who can reverse death. The one who says to us, "*Do not be afraid; just have faith.*" And then he turns to the child, "*Talitha koum,*" that is, "*Little girl, I say to you, arise!*"

Have a Blessed Week!

*Rev. Rafal Ligenza*

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