JMJ

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – B – 2021

To hear the news that his little girl was dead must have broken that father’s heart. The death of any child is enough to bring tears to the eyes; but to hear the news of the death of his own child must have been absolutely gut-wrenching. He was a fortunate man to have God standing beside him at that moment, because God was the only one who could do something more than comfort him. God could bring that little girl back to life – and He did.

But what Jesus did for that child was to bring her back to *this* life, in which there’d be disappointments and heartache, future illnesses perhaps, and eventually death. And where would God be then?

He’d be in the same place He always is: beside us, to comfort us and *to bring us hope.*

Jesus gave this little girl a new lease on an old life. But the reason He came was to bring her and all of us something a lot better than that. He came to bring us undying life – with Him, in Heaven.

Many years ago, I had a car with a bumper sticker that read “God is Pro-Life.” On more than one occasion it was a conversation starter. Some people gave me two thumbs. Some people didn’t. One of them said to me: “‘God is Pro-Life’? Are you sure about that?” “Yes,” I said (with a smile). “If God didn’t *want* us here, we wouldn’t *be* here!” Yes, God is very pro-life.

In fact, He’s so pro-life that He’s pro-life even after death. “He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly” – even after we die!

If God can’t bring life out of death, He’s not really God; not if death has the last say. If death has the last say, then death is more powerful than God, our very pro-life God.

How do we know that He’s powerful against death? Well, we have this miracle and also the raising of Lazarus from the dead. And we have witnesses. We have the witness of the people who saw this girl die. They were so sure that she was dead, and not just asleep, that they ridiculed Jesus. Well, they must have been surprised! And therefore, very good witnesses. And when He raised Lazarus, there were witnesses, too – many of them. Many had come to comfort Martha and Mary at the death of their brother. Before Jesus even arrived, Lazarus was in the tomb. And he’d been there for four days! He was as dead as a doornail.

The greatest of all God’s pro-life miracles, however, was His own Resurrection. Were there any witnesses? *Many* saw Him – in the flesh – after He’d died on the cross. There were Mary Magdalene and the other women. There were the Twelve Apostles. And He also appeared to “five hundred brothers at once,” St. Paul said; and most of them were still alive when Paul wrote this. “And last of all,” St. Paul said, “He was seen by me” (see 1 Cor 15).

The raising of this little girl in the Gospel today is only a small foreshadowing of the thing that God wants *for all of us:* life together with Him in Heaven, body and soul together, never to die again, never to be anything but happy. “Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as entered the thoughts of men, what God has prepared for those who love Him.”

So, trust Him. If you can trust Him with your life, you can trust Him in everything.