

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B - 2009 - Mk 5:21-43

1. During my studies at St. Joseph Seminary, my summer job was to work in the offices of Calvary Cemetery in Queens.
 - a. I worked there with another seminarian, and several highschool students.
 - i. we had the time to get into all kinds of discussions.
 - b. And because two of us were studying for the priesthood,
 - i. a lot of discussions were about religion.
2. One day this one high school girl named Jennifer said, "Wouldn't it be great if someone could just come back from the dead to tell us that everything we believe in was true?"
 - a. The other seminarian and I shouted
 - b. "Hello! Didn't that already happen? Isn't that exactly what Jesus did?"
 - i. To which this girl just rolled her eyes
 - ii. and replied,
 1. "What Jesus? No. I mean REALLY rose from the dead!"
 - c. Now, Jennifer wasn't really saying she didn't
 - d. believe in Jesus' resurrection.
 - i. She knew that it was Jesus' resurrection that makes the Catholic faith;
 - e. And she knew that it was the experience of Jesus' resurrection that motivated those first disciples to go out and spread the Catholic faith as Jesus' apostles.
3. And that was just her point: in our modern world, filled with suffering and death,
 - a. If the resurrection is so important, wouldn't it be great not just to hear about it from someone else, but to actually experience it?
 - b. For if we experienced the resurrection,
 - i. we wouldn't have to depend the apostle's testimony
 - c. If we experienced the resurrection, we would be apostles too.
4. In Jesus day the people would agree. For their world was also filled with suffering and death
 - a. And thus they believed;
 - i. that one day God would make right the suffering and death in this world
 - ii. by raising us all from the dead.
 - b. That was why Jesus' resurrection was so important to the first Christians,
 - i. Because they believed that Jesus resurrection was the start of the resurrection of everyone, and the beginning of the kingdom of God.
5. The people in the Gospel writer Mark's day would agree as well.
 - a. However, there was a problem.
 - b. For 40 years after Jesus' resurrection, the resurrection of the dead had not happened.
 - i. Moreover in their day the people of Israel had rebelled against the injustice and cruelty of Rome. Rome fought back, and in battles that

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B - 2009 - Mk 5:21-43

- would make what has been happening in Iran this week look like a birthday party,
 - ii. Their cities were being ransacked, their people killed.
- c. The resurrection was beginning to become what it was for my friend in that cemetery office that day,
- d. what it is for so many of us every Sunday,
 - i. Something we hear about, but something we do not see.
- 6. But Mark believed that that was not true;
- 7. he believed that the resurrection was not t something that happened only in the past to Jesus and at some future day for everyone else.
- 8. Mark believed that the resurrection was something we can see and experience here and now.
 - a. It is just that we are not often looking for it in the right place.
- 9. Just like the first Christians, we would look for the resurrection in events like when in today's gospel Jesus raises Jairus' daughter from the dead and all are astonished at his power.
- 10. But Mark does something to this story; right in the middle of it he puts another story;
 - a. A story of a person who was sick with an illness that went far beyond physical distress.
 - i. For the person was a woman; and her illness was an ongoing flow of menstrual blood.
 - b. According to law a woman who was in her period was considered unclean; no one, not even her husband could touch her, until her time was over and she had ritually washed herself.
 - c. However Mark said that this woman had been suffering from this for 12 years; thus for 12 years she was excluded from her family, from her community, from her people; she was no one; she was as good as dead.
 - i. That is until she touches Jesus' cloak and she is healed. Once healed she can return to her family, return to her community return to her life; and it all happened because of her faith in Jesus.
- 11. Mark does this a lot in his Gospel; he starts one story, then takes another and sticks it in the middle of the first. The point of all this might be lost on us, but it was not on the first Christians;
- 12. Mark is saying if you want to understand the one story, look at the other; thus if you want to experience the resurrection, like the one Jairus and his family experienced that day,
 - a. Look for moments in which people like that woman who were excluded, are included
 - b. Look for people who are thought to be unclean by others, are made clean
 - c. Look for places where people work together to see to it that what happened to that woman with the flow of blood happens all the time,
 - d. Because it is at those moments, with those people and in those places

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B - 2009 - Mk 5:21-43

- i. that we see the risen Jesus at work and experience the resurrection.
13. Because according to Mark the kingdom of God and the resurrection of the dead happen all the time.
 - a. It happens whenever the injustice and prejudice of this world are overcome by a community that believes in Jesus and his resurrection,
 - b. and thus becomes that place where all are included, accepted and made clean through forgiveness and love..
14. That is radical. Too radical for many and maybe that is why we miss it;
 - a. maybe that is why the resurrection of Jesus has become for so many of us what it was for my friend Jennifer; an ancient event that we believe in but never really experience.
 - b. But we can according to Mark;
 - c. we can according to Jesus
 - d. we can even according to the Church, which is still that place which opens its doors to all, so that all might enter, be accepted forgiven and loved.
 - e. And when we work to make our parishes that kind of a place;
 - f. well then we won't just have to remember the resurrection on Easter
 - g. or say we believe it in the creed;
 - h. We will experience it in the lives and the faces of a community
 - i. which in the midst of a world filled with prejudice and injustice,
 - j. suffering and death offers all people faith, and life.