

Year B Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 1, 2012
Wis 1:13-15; 2:23-24; Ps 30; 2 Cor 8:7, 9, 13-15; Mk 5:21-43

We can say that the message of this Sunday's readings is that God favors life over death. This seems like a truism, something obvious, but in fact it is an important, even urgent call to us. We do not in fact favor life over death. In many ways we are destroying ourselves and our planet, by choosing idols, false things we deem indispensable and desirable, over the good things God offers us in his creation, to be used and not abused (meaning, "used wrongfully or improperly"). Take food, for example: it is meant for nourishment, for simple enjoyment, as needed and in moderation. Proper eating maintains our health and capacity to enjoy the great variety of food and even delicacies. Abuse of food by overeating and eating too much of certain kinds of foods (and, inevitably, not enough of others) leads to ill-health and the decreased enjoyment of life. We now have a horrible epidemic in this country and even the very young quickly are started in this terrible path of misuse of God's creation. Talk about being "pro-life" might begin by reflection on this very-close-to-home topic. Not to mention that waste of food and super-sizing and overindulgence is the one bad extreme at the other end of the great food scarcities which afflict so much of the world and which we should reflect about if we take the one graphic description of the Final Judgment seriously, the one found in Mat 25:31-46 ("I was hungry and you gave me to eat . . . (but) Lord, when did we see you? . . .").

The first reading from the philosophical Book of Wisdom –a Jewish-Greek work which reflects Greek philosophy, which stressed moderation and self-knowledge, the two great maxims being "Know thyself" and "Nothing in excess": we can say these are essentials for a truly human life– states that God intended creation to be good and to be used properly, that we are meant to live well, and that death and disorder are but the result of sin and abuses, things of the devil, the murderer and liar from the beginning' (Jn 8:44). We might even apply the word "drug" mentioned here (the Greek word is *pharmakon*) to the great need of "destructive drugs" (all have bad side effects) which our society resorts to, either to dull the pain which comes from disordered lives with bad priorities or to compensate for abuses in eating and lifestyle which cause health problems.

The reading from St. Paul sets forth the example of Christ, who being rich became poor to give us life. Those who are able to make a lot of money should not abuse this by keeping too

much for themselves (and perishing through idolatry, which is greed, Col 3:5) and not sharing with the needy, who perish through malnutrition etc. And thus we have the intertwined stories of the bleeding woman who spent lots of money on doctors who did not help, but who was saved by faith in Christ, and the little twelve year old girl who was raised by Jesus who took her hand and gave her something to eat.