

In a 1789 letter to Jean-Baptiste Leroy, one of our nation's founding fathers - Benjamin Franklin - is noted as saying:

*"in this world nothing can be said to be certain,
except death and taxes."*

With the Fourth of July coming mid-week and debates in the Judicial and Executive branches as to whether health care is or is not a tax; we might miss the timeliness of this quote to today's readings.

Namely, the certainty of death.

In the Book of Wisdom, we hear that:

*"God did not make death,
nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living."*

As well as,

*"by the envy of the devil, death entered the world,
and they who belong to his company experience it."*

I could quote St. Thomas Aquinas on how evil is the absence of good; and sin a choice for absence. Or perhaps I could list out the Four Last Things, namely - Death, Judgement, Heaven, and Hell. Or maybe even go into an exposition on the Apostle's Creed, and the fourth through seventh points:

- 4. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died,
and was buried.*
- 5. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.*
- 6. He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.*
- 7. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.*

But, despite this untimely topic being in the limelight of today's First Reading, we see something different in the Gospel.

That is, Our Lord's victory over death.

In the raising of Jairus' daughter, Jesus gives three "words" that should rouse us today. In the midst of what appears inevitable, Our Lord admonishes us to three things.

First: when a messenger arrives from Jairus' home with the information that his daughter is dead, Jesus counters with:

"Do not be afraid; just have faith."

The certainty of worldly experts often intrudes into our lives and our thoughts. Faith calls us to rise out of the mundane and to anticipate the miraculous. It is the expectation that God will intrude into our lives that allows us to see the miracles that are already present.

Second: when the entourage arrives at the house and finds the professional mourners already wailing and carrying on, Jesus proposes that:

“The child is not dead but asleep.”

Jesus’ statement of hope is met with ridicule. They see His statement as stupid - and possibly an interruption to their paid professional services. In a world filled with despair, hope will often be met with taunts and mocking. Yet it is hope that allows us to raise our eyes to see the higher reality above and beyond the ordinary. Hope opens our lives to the extraordinary reality of heaven on earth - to see that the Kingdom of God is among us ... right here ... right now.

And finally, through the action of raising the little girl from the dead, Jesus speaks a word of Love. Knowing what we heard in Wisdom, that:

*“God did not make death,
nor does he rejoice in the destruction of the living.”*

It is only logical that the Only-begotten Son of God, when faced with death, will reverse the consequences of the devil’s envy - and as St. Paul reminds us, this reversal was brought about through *“the gracious act of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

God’s answer to death is found in the three Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love. Through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the sting of death is reversed - and God the Father’s gracious gift of new life in Jesus Christ, his Son is realized in us; and we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ - let us pray for his healing touch to stir to life anything within us that has died ... let us receive through this Sacrament the grace and power to fill us with new life and reverse anything within us that needs to be realigned to the loving heart of the Trinity. Let us pray that Faith, Hope, and Love may transform us into the daughters and sons of God so that we might, in turn, transform the world around us.