

Fr. Nick Dant's Homily, Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Indianapolis
Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, June 30-July 1, 2018, Cycle B

The people of Jesus' day felt a dread about existence. Much like people feel a dread about existence in our modern day world. In Jesus' day people felt something was wrong with their society, their economy, even with their religious and civic culture – sound familiar! We modern folk can certainly feel dread for what the ramifications will be for our society with its breakdown in civil discourse and human decency.

In Jesus' day, as with our day, no one could agree on what had gone wrong, or where things had gone awry. Many certainly offered their potential, social, or religious solutions. Some, like the Pharisees, believed the problems could be solved only when Israel would commit itself to a rigorous observance of the Covenant - restoring the good ole days if you will. Other groups, like the Zealot party drew their inspiration from the Maccabees of two centuries earlier, and felt the solution lie in Israel rising up in revolt and overthrowing their foreign oppressors, the Romans still, others, like the Essenes, felt the answer was to escape the corrupt society altogether flee into the desert, and create authentic pure communities. Finally, there were the leaders of Israel, those who sat on the Sanhedrin, who endorsed a “real politik” of dealing with world as it was, and not really dealing with the issues that caused their dread of existence at all.

Christians offered their solution, too, for dealing with the anxieties of their world that was causing such dread of existence. The Gospel writer of Mark presents this answer in the Gospel passage we have this weekend: the answer is Faith in Jesus Christ's ability to set right what has gone awry. Now the world laughed at the Christians at the beginning of Christianity and still laughs at our answer now. For faith in Jesus to have an effect, takes time, sometimes lots of time. Faith in Jesus does not offer magical immediate solutions, but does afford hope that ultimately God has the ability to make everything work for good for those who believe in God.

The healing of the woman who suffered from hemorrhages, and the raising of Jairus' daughter are both signs of hope that is, through, with and by Jesus, God can raise and is raising the world from death to life. These two females healed by Jesus are images of the Church – you and I – those who put their faith in Jesus. Notice that the woman and the girl are both associated with number twelve. The women suffered for twelve years, the girl is twelve years old. The twelve tribes of Israel are foundations of the Jewish people, and the twelve Apostles are the foundation of the Church.

Faith does not come easily in any age; faith is a gift from God. What Mark is saying is that it is through our faith as the Church, that God is working healing in our lives and raising us from all that is in league with death. Only through faith in Jesus do we transcend the confines of sin, and death, despair disillusion and fear! All that is awry with the world.