

A reading from the book of Wisdom.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

God did not make death,  
and he does not delight in the death of the living.  
For he created all things so that they might exist;  
the generative forces of the world are wholesome,  
and there is no destructive poison in them,  
and the dominion of Hades is not on earth.  
For virtue is immortal.  
For God created man for incorruption,  
and made him in the image of his own eternity,  
but through the devil's envy death entered the world,  
and those who belong to his company experience it.



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

A reading from the second letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

Pause - and look up at the assembly

Brothers and sisters:

Now as you excel in everything –  
in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness,  
and in our love for you –  
so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.  
For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,  
so that by his poverty you might become rich.  
I do not mean that there should be relief for others  
and pressure on you,  
but it is a question of a fair balance  
between your present abundance and their need,  
so that their abundance may be for your need,  
in order that there may be a fair balance.  
As it is written,  
“The one who had much did not have too much,  
and the one who had little did not have too little.”



Pause for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## GOSPEL READING – B 13

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

*Glory to you, O Lord*

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side,  
a great crowd gathered around him;  
and he was by the sea.

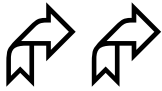
Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and,  
when he saw Jesus,  
fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly,  
“My little daughter is at the point of death.  
Come and lay your hands on her,  
so that she may be made well, and live.”  
So Jesus went with him.  
And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.

Now there was a woman who suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years;  
after long and painful treatment under various doctors,  
she had spent all she had without being any the better for it,  
in fact, she was getting worse.

She had heard about Jesus,  
and she came up behind him through the crowd  
and touched his cloak.  
‘If I can touch even his clothes,’ she had told herself  
‘I shall be well again.’  
And the source of the bleeding dried up instantly,  
and she felt in herself that she was cured of her complaint.

Immediately aware that power had gone out from him  
Jesus turned round in the crowd and said,  
‘Who touched my clothes?’  
His disciples said to him.  
“You see the crowd is pressing round you  
and yet you say, “Who touched me?” ‘  
But he continued to look all round to see who had done it.  
Then the woman came forward, frightened and trembling  
because she knew what had happened to her,  
and she fell at his feet and told him the whole truth.  
‘My daughter,’ he said  
‘your faith has restored you to health;  
go in peace and be free from your complaint.’





While Jesus was still speaking,  
some people came from the leader's house to say,  
"Your daughter is dead.  
Why trouble the teacher any further?"  
But overhearing what they said,  
Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue,  
"Do not fear, only believe."

Jesus allowed no one to follow him.  
When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue,  
he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.  
When he had entered, he said to them,  
"Why do you make a commotion and weep?  
The child is not dead but sleeping."  
And they laughed at him.

Then Jesus put them all outside,  
and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him,  
and went in where the child was.  
He took her by the hand and said to her,  
"Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!"  
And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about  
for she was twelve years of age.  
At this they were overcome with amazement.  
Jesus strictly ordered them that no one should know this,  
and told them to give her something to eat.



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

### **Reading I: Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24**

The controlling reading, as usual the Gospel, is the raising of Jairus' daughter, with its proclamation of Christ as victor over death. The reading from Wisdom provides the Old Testament presuppositions for this victory (Protestants can be assured that although this reading comes from one of the "apocryphal" books, the doctrine it asserts is an interpretation of Genesis 1-3, consonant with Paul's teaching).

The world as God created it was essentially good (Wisdom 1:14; see [Genesis 1](#)). Humans, in particular, were created to be immortal (Gen 3 contrariwise seems to assume that they were created mortal), but Wisdom deduces from the fact of their creation in God's image ([Genesis 1:26](#)) that they were created immortal, and Paul seems to share this assumption when he speaks of death, as does the last phrase in Wisdom 1:14 here, as an alien intruder into the world, consequent upon sin ([Romans 5:12](#)).

Finally, Wisdom 2:24 equates the serpent in [Genesis 3](#) with the devil. This is the first known instance of this identification, which is found also in the New Testament, including Paul (see [2 Corinthians 11:3](#)), though not mentioned in Romans 5.

The doctrine of this passage appears at first sight to conflict with the self-evident truth that death is a biological fact. It is arguable, however, from the connection of immortality with righteousness (see Wisdom 1:15), that the author is speaking of moral and spiritual death, as Paul undoubtedly does in Romans 5.

In that case, biological death has more than a merely physical meaning; it is the ultimate sign of human beings' alienation from God, the "sacrament of sin" (P. Althaus). It is death in this sense—not physical death *per se*, as Christians still have to die—that Christ overcomes by his death on the cross.

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### **Responsorial Psalm: 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11, 12, 13**

According to its title, this psalm was originally associated with the restoration of the temple in the time of the Maccabees in 164 B.C. In that case, the original reference to "death" would be the catastrophes of the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes and the Jewish war of independence. It thus becomes a psalm of national thanksgiving. Here, however, it is a psalm celebrating Christ's victory over death, as adumbrated in the Gospel reading.

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### **Reading II: 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15**

As usual, the second reading has no direct connection with the other readings but simply appears in course. Chapter 8 of 2 Corinthians is concerned entirely with Paul's collection for the Jerusalem church. He had undertaken to raise this money several years previously at the apostolic conference (Galatians 2) and had faithfully carried out his side of the agreement. Accordingly, he had proposed to the Corinthian converts that they take part in the collection and suggested how it could be organized ([1 Corinthians 16:1-4](#)).

Meanwhile, however, the great crisis in the relations between Paul and the Corinthians had supervened, the result of the appearance of the false prophets in Corinth. In the ensuing fray (involving a

sudden and disastrous visit to Corinth by Paul), the severe letter, identified by many with 2 Corinthians 10-13, a visit by Titus, the Corinthian *volte-face*, and the writing of the letter of thanksgiving ([2 Corinthians 1:1–2:13](#); [7:5-16](#)), the collection had been forgotten.

Now that the crisis is over, Paul can return to the subject (2 Corinthians 8; 9, thought by some to be two separate communications on the subject). In the course of this correspondence, Paul musters every argument he can think of to encourage the Corinthians to proceed with their fund-raising drive.

The strongest motivation for Christian giving is specified in verse 9—gratitude for the riches Christ has brought through his self-emptying in the incarnation (for the doctrine, see [Philippians 2:6-11](#)).

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### **Gospel: Mark 5:21-43 or 5:21-24, 35b-43**

It is characteristic of Mark's Gospel for one pericope to be inserted in the middle of another. Here the story of the woman with the hemorrhage is inserted into the narrative of the raising of Jairus' daughter. It is disputed whether this insertion is due to the evangelist's redaction or whether it came to him in this form from the tradition.

The older form critics took the latter view, supposing that the insertion was a device to explain the delay between the arrival of the messenger from Jairus and Jesus' arrival at the house, a delay that meant that the little girl was dead by that time.

Later redaction critics are inclined to see in the insertion an attempt by the evangelist to allow one miracle to interpret the other.

The healing of the woman with the hemorrhage is interpreted as an act of salvation (vv. 28, 34); so also is the raising of Jairus' daughter. Each is therefore a prefigurement of Christ's salvation from death. The shorter reading simply omits the insert.

We first offer a reconstruction of the history of the tradition of the two stories. On the historical level, we may suppose that Jesus healed the daughter of Jairus from a critical but not fatal illness (v. 23). In the tradition the narrative was then modeled on the raisings by Elijah and Elisha and served to proclaim Jesus as the eschatological prophet. The background of this story seems to be thoroughly Palestinian.

The story of the woman with the hemorrhage, on the other hand, seems to be more Hellenistic. The woman's action in touching the healer's garment suggests that she thought of Jesus as *theios aner* ("divine man"). This aspect is enhanced by Luke, who adds that Jesus knew that power (*dynamis*) had gone out of him when the woman touched him.

Mark seeks to correct this notion by transforming the woman's superstitious act into an expression of faith, and the whole episode into a personal encounter with the Savior.

In addition, by combining the two episodes Mark inserts at the end of the raising his motif of the messianic secret (v. 43a). From a historical point of view, the command to keep silent about the raising would be absurd, but as a theological device it makes sense.

What Mark is saying is that the true significance of the act of raising is not yet apparent. It is only at the resurrection that the veil of secrecy over Jesus will be lifted (see Mark 9:9), and therefore it is only then that Jesus will be seen as victor over death.

The raising of the little girl is not itself Jesus' victory over death (the girl had to die sometime, and certainly did). It was only a parable or prefiguration of the act by which Jesus overcame death in its existential sense. The healing of the woman with the hemorrhage prefigures Christ's death as a cleansing from sin.

Reginald H. Fuller