

## 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time - Mark 5: 21-43

A Sunday School teacher began her lesson with a question, "Boys and girls, what do we know about God?"

A hand shot up in the air. "He is an artist!" said the kindergarten boy.

"Really? How do you know that?" the teacher asked.

"You know, Our Father, who does **art** in Heaven.."

Today's Gospel includes more than a powerful miracle by Jesus. It offers a pattern for living. But if we wish to appreciate the pattern, we must place ourselves into the character of Jairus, the synagogue official.

Imagine his panic and his fear when he realized that his little girl, 12 years old, was about to die. We can presume that Jairus did everything he could to cure the girl, but nothing was working. When the Gospel begins, the child is at the point of death.

But Jairus is a responsible person. When he hears that Jesus is in the neighborhood, he forms a plan. He leaves the deathbed of his daughter and his house full of people and goes out to put his plan into action.

He finds Jesus and pleads with him to come and lay his hands on his daughter, hoping and trusting that if Jesus would do that, the little girl would live. We see Jairus implementing his plan as today's Gospel begins.

It is working! Jesus agrees to go and the two of them set out for Jairus' house together. Then the tragic news arrives. It's too late, the child has died. Jairus' plan will no longer work. As the people who bring the news say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" There is nothing left to do.

It is at this point that Jesus says a curious thing. He turns to Jairus with a directive, “**Do not be afraid. Just have faith.**” It is likely that Jesus’ words disturb Jairus. In anger he might respond, “I did have faith. I put my faith in the plan that you would heal my daughter. But now it is too late. She is dead. I had faith in a plan that did not work.”

It would take Jairus some time to realize that Jesus had another plan that would work. Jairus’ plan fell apart. Jesus’ plan would succeed. Jairus was planning that his daughter be healed. Jesus was planning a resurrection.

The pattern that comes forth from today’s Gospel has two aspects. First of all, it emphasizes that responsible people have to devise plans. Through our efforts we are expected to plot ways through which goodness will be brought to ourselves and to those we love.

But a second aspect reminds us that God also has plans that might be different from our own. If we need a job, we cannot sit around and simply pray. We have to act, to send out resumes, to go for interviews.

At times we become hopeful over an interview that seems to go very well. But when we find out that the job has gone to someone else, Jesus says, “Don’t be afraid. Just have faith. I have another plan.”

We might be looking for someone to love, someone with whom to share our life. We must go out and meet people. We must be open to arrange dates. Sometimes we become excited when we meet someone and say, “This person could be the one.” But when we find out that this person is **not** the one, Jesus says, “Don’t be afraid. Just have faith. I have another plan.”

We may have lost someone who we loved. The hole of the grief is so large that we can hardly breathe.

But we have to choose to enter life again. Sometimes it seems we are making progress, and then there are other days when it is as bad as ever. On those days Jesus says, “Do not be afraid. Just have faith. It will happen, but it will happen according to my plan, not yours.”

As responsible people we must make plans to address the issues in our lives. It is important to take the steps to build our dreams.

But as people of faith, we know that God also has plans that are not always easy to see. The most consoling part of today’s Gospel is that when Jairus’ plan falls apart, when he is told that his daughter is dead, Jesus is already walking with him on the road to the place where His plan will work.

We need to believe that Jesus is walking with us. So that when our best plans for life collapse, we can turn to Him and say, “Well, my plan didn’t work. I think it is time to show me yours.”  
AMEN.