

Homily for 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

It was a Monday evening. As I watched the evening news I received a telephone call from my mother. Her voice was shaky as she said to me: “I have some very bad news: your sister has cancer.” There are no words that I could use to describe my reaction except to say that for the next three days I lived my life in a fog – in fact, it didn’t even feel like I was living. I just went through the motions waiting for someone to wake me up from this horrible nightmare.

Of course, there was no waking up. At the time I was living in St. Louis. I remember walking into a church with these words written above the church door:

The same everlasting Father who takes care of
you today will take care of you tomorrow and every day.
Either He will shield you from suffering, or He will
give you unfailing strength to bear it.
Be at peace and put aside all anxious thoughts
and imaginations.

Those words, which I jotted down, rang in my heart like a bell peeling in a churchyard. They weren’t “pie in the sky.” It was an

expression of the rock-bottom belief that all of life is in the hands of God and God will never desert us.

Each of us here today has some problem, some worry, some concern, some cross to bear. For some the cross may be insignificant; for others, the cross seems to have unbearable weight. When we face these worries, these problems, these fears...these crosses, we often find our faith challenged and hope wears thin in our lives. But it is precisely our faith that teaches that God holds our lives in the palm of his hands and that life is not a game of chance.

The Gospel today calls us to embrace the profound truth that God is here caring for us today, tomorrow and always. Jesus summarizes it when he says: “Do not be afraid; just have faith.”

In life we journey on a road. Sometimes it is bright and brimming with possibility. Sometimes the sky turns dark and the road becomes ever so difficult. At moments we want to cry out and say: “No – I can’t go on.”

Today’s Gospel would ask us one very simple question: “Where is your faith?” God always walks with us. And even though there are moments when God seems absent, God is indeed there and is present at every turn of our lives.

