

Jesus is the Lord who gives Life

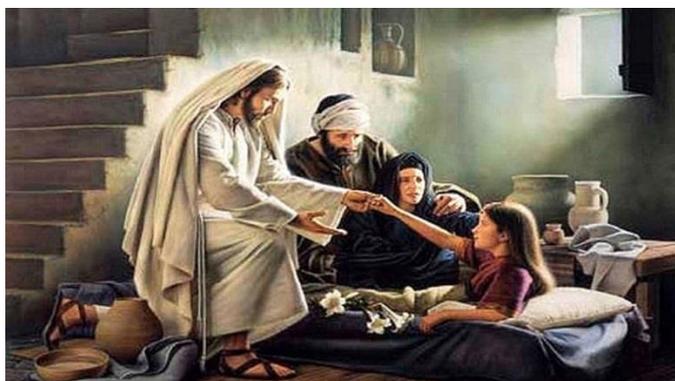
On Tuesday, I had the privilege of attending the funeral of the father of one of my students. I say, “privilege”, because it was an honour to be present at a wonderful celebration of life. The family are Nigerian and their belief that Catholicism is a religion of love, light and hope, and that death should, therefore, be seen as a celebration of the hope of resurrection, meant that white was the dominant colour.



From the white vestments worn, the white coffin, the white flowers, the white outfits worn by the immediate family and the white bags of food given to us as we left, we were in no doubt that we were celebrating a life that had existed here in this world and that continues to exist in the next.

“I will raise you up.”

Today’s Gospel tells the story of Jairus’ daughter. The Gospel writer describes how Jairus, a synagogue official, pleaded with Jesus to save his daughter’s life. Jesus went with him and a large crowd followed. Before they reached the house, word came that his daughter was dead. Jesus said to Jairus, *“Do not be afraid; only have faith”*. Jesus took his three special friends with him – Peter, James and John. When they reached Jairus’ house, he sent the people who were weeping and wailing away saying, *“The child is not dead, but asleep”*. They laughed at him, but Jesus went inside with his friends and the child’s parents. Taking the child by the hand, Jesus said to her, *“Talitha, kumi!”* which means, *“Little girl, I tell you to get up”*. Everyone was astonished and Jesus told them to give her something to eat.



Last week we heard not to be afraid and to have faith in Jesus. We are reminded once again, *“Do not be afraid”*. As Jesus tells us often, Faith can move mountains.

The second reading speaks to us of another way of giving life. St Paul tells the people of Corinth that they always have the most of everything and so they are expected to put the most into works of mercy. He is clear that giving to others does not mean making life difficult for ourselves. As he says, *“It is a question of balancing what happens to be your surplus now against their present need, and one day they may have something to spare that will supply your own need”*.



What does this mean for us today? What do we have that others need for life? The answer that immediately comes to my mind is Covid-19 vaccines. So many people in our world will die unless we give of our surplus now. We should act now, not because we might be paid back in some way in the future, but because it is the right way to act.



Another way we can help is to do whatever we can to support the building of the Parish Centre. Not everyone will be able to do the same, but if we all work together using whatever gifts, talents, money, connections we may have, we will make a difference to future generations in Bermondsey.



Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace; here the love of Christ shall end divisions. All are welcome, in this place.

Let us build a Centre where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known. Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face; let us bring an end to fear and danger. All are welcome, in this place.

Let us build a Centre where love can dwell and all can safely live, a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.