

# Homily

## 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday OT - A

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski  
July 15-16, 2026

Wis 12: 13, 16-19  
Ps 86: 5-6, 9-10, 15-16  
Rm 8: 26-27  
Mt 13: 24-43

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*This was Day Three of the St. Anne Novena, focusing on the Second Sign in the Gospel of John – The Cure of the Official's Son*

From the Gospel of John Chapter Four...

At that time, Jesus left Samaria for Galilee, where he had made the water wine. Now there was a royal official whose son was ill in Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, who was near death.

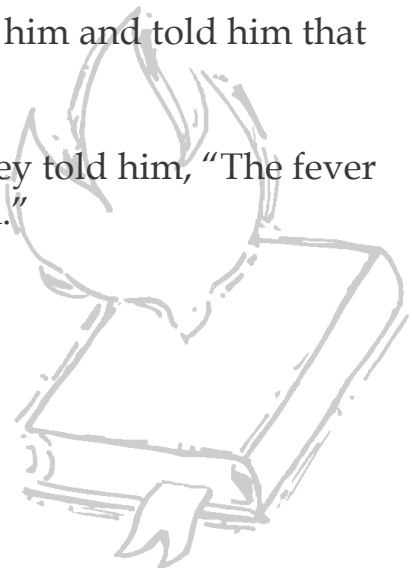
Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe."

The royal official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

Jesus said to him, "You may go; your son will live." The man believed what Jesus said to him and left.

While he was on his way back, his slaves met him and told him that his boy would live.

He asked them when he began to recover. They told him, "The fever left him yesterday, about one in the afternoon."



The father realized that just at that time Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live,” and he and his whole household came to believe.

[Now] this was the second sign Jesus did when he came to Galilee from Judea.

I was having a conversation with a resident here at St. Anne's, who told me that her family has lived in the village for quite a long time. In some ways, this person has been accepted by the community at large, and in some ways they have not. The way that life works is that after a certain period of time living in a community, we get really comfortable with certain groups with which we associate, and sometimes the people from the outside, who may seem different or maybe seem unique, sometimes are not welcomed. This is not just in one community, this is in *all* communities, that people sometimes shut others out. In Hinduism, this may be referred as an “Ego Cage” in which some people live, if we want to follow the way of humanity. The “Ego Cage” is about me and often it is not about everyone else.

What is unique to me concerning this story from John, this second “sign” in this particular gospel, is that John is depicting a healing story about an “outsider,” someone who is not a believer in the Jewish faith. In the gospel of Mark, many outsiders express their faith in Jesus *before* the miracle, even though they are outsiders, even though they are rejected by others. All four gospels illustrate a great deal of rejection of God from the insiders but a great amount of faith from those on the outside, whether it be the people of Samaria, or the Syrians, or the Syrophenicians, or the Gentiles.

As a general rule, society *likes* to cut people off, to shut people off, not just in the First Century, but in today's age as well. As kids, we all like to play in the same sandbox, but as we get older, people tell us who are good people in the sandbox and who are not. Even the people who do good today and toss the seeds of faith liberally, have to endure those who toss weeds “just because.” Even if a person is doing good, there are those in life who will respond, “Regardless of what they do, this person or that person is evil in this way and in this way, and so on.

What we learn in scriptures that when we go “scorched earth” then those who act this way reap what they sow and that the measure by which they measure will be measured against them. If we choose to demean people because we do not like them or we want to shut them off, we are condemning ourselves because that is what the gospel teaches us. We do not like to hear that when we shut people off, or we have closed our minds that God does the same to us (see Matthew 25), but this type of “bad” attitude (as opposed to “be” attitude happens all the time.

People approach me constantly by saying how they are welcomed and how they have been rejected – those from the outside sometimes feel at home and sometimes they do not. In the Online Liturgy I offered this weekend, I accompany the homily with a video concerning one characteristic in the Protestant Community that often is disregarded at a Catholic Mass, the concept of “fellowship” and welcoming, which is why I drive this point home at every parish I serve because at every

parish I serve, inevitably people often approach me on this subject, which determines whether they choose to stay at a parish or leave it.

For this reason, I keep driving home at the Masses I serve the theme of *Bienvenidos y Hospitalidad* – these cannot be just words but they must be a way of life and a of contrite and loving heart if we ever want to make it to heaven. For this reason, I emphasize these themes with ushers and secretaries because I consider them the first line of defense when someone enters a church or an office – a positive attitude tells a person that they are welcomed, loved, and that we really care.

On the other hand, when someone feels like they are getting “daggers of the eyes” or a sense of judgement or condemnation when they walk through a door, the person asks whether they wish to enter this church or office or even if they are welcome. Ninety percent of all communication is non-verbal and the expression on someone’s face tells a story all of its own.

If nothing else, this story of the official’s son, this story of an outsider, tells us that Jesus welcomed the outsider who comes to him; Jesus cures

the outsider and reveals a story of acceptance sometimes not embraced by people of faith (in the fourth chapter of Luke's gospel, the so-called faithful tried to throw God off a cliff when he stated that the outsider had more faith than those on the inside).

In the world of political philosophy, a scholar named John Rawls might use a term with this gospel passage called "the veil of ignorance." In his view, if we wish to make peace with others, we must place that veil over every person we encounter so we do not see people as Jew or Greek, slave free, male or female. Rather, that veil reveals the soul in front of us as a holy sacred person with a story to tell, who has been given a gift of life, and we have to treat them so. When we do not, when we have people running through our "gauntlet of condemnation," so to speak, then we are *not* living the gospel message.

Welcoming and hospitality is what Jesus teaches us. Fellowship is a concept that Protestant Churches embrace but many Catholics do not – we often are conditioned as an "eat and run" society at Mass. If we have faith in God, miracles can happen. We learn this message in the second

sign from John's gospel on which we just focused, where the outsider had faith in God, and at the same time, embraced that faith when his child was healed.

We know in today's gospel that many sow wonderful seeds of faith in this Border Town Garden while others try to choke the field by planting weeds – this is life. Some people enjoy sowing weeds into the field all the time. Some people find comfort and solace disparaging another person – this also is a part of life. In the scriptures, in the history of the Church, those who sow good seeds often are choked by the weeds of sin – our society is conditioned today to tear others down with easy tools like gossip and social media. God also teaches us in the end that few will be saved and others will not. That is the gospel message.

Somehow, we need to learn from the sower of good seeds, from the outsider who embraced the faith. If we love, if we welcome, if we say that we are a people of *Bienvenidos y Hospitalidad*, then all kinds of wonderful things can happen.

On this third day of the St. Anne Novena, we continue to focus on a barren woman that our God embraced, gifting her with an immaculate child who served as the first tabernacle of the New Testament. In an apocryphal gospel on which the St. Anne story is based, God told her that she was special and that she would give birth to a woman of substance.

Today's gospel offers us a choice of the weeds or the wheat, of the outsider who embraces the faith as opposed to the insider that does not understand. If we choose to sow the weeds into the wheat, then we have to answer for that but if we love, if we welcome, if we allow the outsider to come in and we do not treat them as loving guests rather than someone just to be tolerated, then great things can happen, and the church can grow. So let us treat each other as if they were Christ, for when we do this, we act as if we are treating God with love. Let us allow people in, with love let's treat them with kindness, not with the dagger of the eyes, not with a sense of disdain, but opening our hearts to saying every single person is sacred in the eyes of God, and we *want* to treat

you that way. That is how you get to heaven. That is how you build community. That is how miracles take place in a church. This is our prayer today.