

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Recently we moved my mother from a nursing home in Overland Park to the Jeanne Jugan Center of the Little Sisters of the Poor here in Kansas City. Mom is 93, and she's very fragile. We approached the Little Sisters about taking her a few years ago. She would have access to daily mass and the rosary as she had every day of her life. Besides, as a family, we have been supporting the Little Sisters for decades. I grew up just a few blocks from their former location at 53rd and Highland. But when the sisters looked over Mom's finances at that time, they decided she wasn't poor enough. They really are the Little Sisters *of the Poor*. We agreed Mom would not want to take a bed that someone with fewer resources needed, so we found her a different home. Now her finances have dwindled to a point where she qualifies for the Little Sisters, and she is enjoying Catholic health care.

When leaders of our diocese opposed the medical research tax that Jackson County voted down last week, we were concerned about this long-term sales tax. Funding medical research is great, but we could think of other ways to spend \$800 million raised over the next 20 years. Besides, many families are struggling enough without an additional sales tax that is especially burdensome on the poor. The Catholic Church's strong commitment to health care can be seen in the nursing homes and hospitals we operate, as well as in the directives of our bishops concerning prudent and responsible care.

Questions such as how to fund research, where tax dollars should go, and how much health care to provide are difficult. Believers take a unique approach to these matters. We support helping people improve their health even at the end of their lives, but we also believe that something lies beyond the grave; death is not the worst thing that can happen to you.

This teaching became clear in the resurrection of Jesus. According to the New Testament, his tomb was empty on that first Easter Sunday morning, and hundreds of his disciples testified that they had seen him alive - after he had died. In Jesus' own day, Sadducees denied that there was a resurrection, but other Jews believed in it. You can hear the beginnings of belief in the resurrection in today's responsorial psalm. The last line goes, "I in justice shall behold your face; on waking I shall be content in your presence." Perhaps the psalm means "on waking up" as we do every morning, but it could also mean "on waking up after we die, we shall be content in the presence of God."

As the autumn leaves fall around us, as nature prepares for the sleep of winter, and as 2013 is fading away, our thoughts turn to our belief in the resurrection, a belief we hold fast as new calendars bid us look to next year and to what lies beyond.