

## **Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time**

**Job 7.1-4, 6-7, 1 Cor. 9.16-19, 22-23, Mark1:29-32**

The Book of Job provides an interesting study. We read that God is having a Divine Council and suddenly Satan shows up. God is proud of Job who worships, sacrifices and prays to God. Job has a strong relationship with God. Satan tells God that Job has been protected so God gives Satan permission to test Job but he may not take his life (see Job 2.1-6). The Scripture states, “And the Lord said to Satan ‘Have you noticed my servant Job, and that there is no one like him, faultless and upright, fearing God and avoiding evil’” Job 2.3.

In today’s first reading Job is contemplating the purpose of life, in particular Job is contemplating the hard labor of life, the sufferings of life and shortness of life. This is a reading I think we all can relate to. Without ruining the end of the book of Job for you, it does have a positive ending. Job has a strong relationship with God. We must recognize that suffering can be used for redemption. The word “redeem” means to rescue, set free, ransom, and to pay the penalty incurred by another. We often lose sight of the definition to “set free,” and we miss the power of our example as Christians to do exactly that — set our neighbor free. We must look at this aspect of Redemptive Suffering if we are to understand its role in our daily lives. St. Paul told the Corinthians that, “indeed, as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so, through Christ, does our consolation overflow. When we are made to suffer, it is for our consolation and salvation” (2 Cor. 1:5, 6). God can always take something bad and make good out of it for God has the perfect plan.

The Gospel’s of Mark, Matthew and Luke (the Synoptic Gospels) all speak of the healing of St. Peter’s mother-in-law. I would like to compare Mark and Luke’s version. In the Gospel of Mark he states, “Simon’s mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. They immediately told him about her” Mark 1.30. Now Luke’s version, “Simon’s mother-in-law was afflicted with a severe fever, and they interceded with him about her.” I think St Luke being a physician describes the illness in more detail. Peter’s mother-in-law was not simply not feeling well, she was very ill. They, the Apostles asked for Jesus to intercede for her. This detail speaks of the value of intercessory prayer.

When Jesus takes her hand and “helped her up” He is demonstrating the healing power of God. St. Peter’s mother-in-law began to serve them. Jesus does not direct her to wait on Him but scripture tells us she waits on Him to show her thanks. Her response is one of service, by which she imitates Jesus. This is an example of an appropriate response for all of us who have received Christ’s free gift of mercy.

Jesus identifies Himself with those who suffer, and His healing work is an extension of His love and mercy. We must remember that man is made of body and soul, thus Jesus does not just heal the body. He heals the soul. God has given each of us free

will. We can choose to seek healing from God or we can turn away from God. We can seek confession (healing of the body and soul) and the Eucharist, or we can put it off. The closest union we can ever have with Jesus occurs in the reception of the Holy Eucharist. Jesus desires us to seek Him to seek healing of our body and soul so receive the Eucharist often.

We read that “they brought to Him all who were ill or possessed by demons.” Jesus heals both physically and spiritually those brought to Him. Jesus desires to do the same for us. Jesus became man in order to suffer and die for us and thereby save us from our sins. By enduring our personal trials and hardships virtuously we can unite our sufferings to share in Christ’s act of redemption.

The CCC 1503 states, “Christ compassion toward the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity are a resplendent sign that ‘God has visited his people’ and that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Jesus has the power not only to heal, but also to forgive sins, he has come to heal the whole man, soul and body; he is the physician the sick have need of.” Jesus heals through the immense love He has for each and everyone of us.

As humans it is difficult for us to comprehend suffering. I think we all can relate to Job in wondering about the sufferings and shortness of life. Through faith we need to know that Jesus Christ is with us. Jesus, the Divine Physician who can heal us both physically and spiritually. We should unite our suffering to Jesus Christ so we may then be healed both physically and spiritually.

After Jesus heals, He goes and prays. St Mark specifically points this out for this is our call. We need to heal our relationship with Jesus through the Sacraments. We need to reach out to Him, to trust in Him that God’s plan is the perfect plan! So let us turn toward Jesus during this Eucharistic sacrifice and ask Him to heal us and fill us with the Holy Spirit so we may unite any sufferings we endure to Him and through Him.

Today’s Gospel calls us to unite ourselves to Jesus in good times and bad. Jesus teaches us how, first as Jesus did with worship, Jesus began in the Synagogue. Second, ask Jesus for his intercession His help, His healing of both body and spirit by using the Sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist. Third, PRAY. Think of the parts of the Mass, “I Confess, I Believe, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Let us Pray,” Jesus has given us a model, let us not do the minimum rather let us rejoice and use the Sacraments often!