

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Why do bad things happen to good people? If God is so good, why couldn't He have prevented the misfortune (sickness, accident, etc) that happened? We've heard these and similar questions asked. We may have even asked them ourselves. The story of Job helps shed some light on these questions in that it tries to refute the ancient Jewish belief that God rewards the good and punishes the wicked in this life. The book describes how God permitted Satan to test the commitment of His faithful servant Job.

The readings today challenge us to go courageously beyond people's expectations by doing good as Jesus did, instead of brooding over all the pain and suffering in the world that we cannot end. They invite us to explore the importance of work in our lives and to learn a lesson in work ethics from Job, Paul and Jesus. While the Gospel presents Jesus enthusiastically living out His Sabbath day of missionary work, the first reading tells of Job's attitude in a striking contrast. In the midst of his long suffering, Job spoke of the tedium and futility of life. Job's words describe the miseries of human existence. Eventually, Job arrived at a place in his life where, in trust and in Faith, he surrendered himself, his suffering, his work and everything he had and had lost to the greater wisdom of God.

In Paul's selection that we hear in his first letter to the Corinthian church, Paul is presented as a true and dynamic follower of Jesus, ready to do something extra for his Lord. Paul's conviction about the Good News and his commitment to Christ were so intense that preaching the Gospel, he resolved to preach it without recompense.

And in the Gospel, Peter's mother-in-law had just been healed, and to show her gratitude she begins to wait on them at table. This particular Gospel selection teaches us that true discipleship means getting involved in giving selfless service to others.

Jesus' first day of public ministry at Capernaum was a Sabbath day. During the day, he had taken part in the synagogue worship, taught with authority, exorcised a man who was possessed with an unclean spirit (we heard this passage last week), and today the curing of Peter's mother-in-law. After all that, and when the sun had set, we are told that people continued to bring people to Him so that they could be healed. The people never gave it a thought that Jesus might be tired from all day. I know that I would begin to question people's consideration of my well-being if they continued to make demands such as we read about. But Jesus didn't say "Don't bother me with your problems." Or - "That's not why I came here today." Jesus is the example for you and for me. We are to be ready to minister to all people, whenever the opportunity arises. It wasn't until the next morning that Jesus was able to get away to a quiet place to be alone with His Father in prayer so as to recharge His spiritual batteries. And - as far as the "re-charging" - Jesus was well aware that even

the most important work had to be continually refueled and evaluated before God His Father. So also with us.

One of the things we can take home from today's readings is the importance of prayer. Paul reminds us that our joy is in the fact that we are called to be with God - whether in prayer, or at the end of time. United in prayer with Jesus, we gain the strength to do what is asked of us. It is Jesus Who shows us true spiritual wisdom. He went off to a lonely place and became absorbed in prayer. We too must turn to prayer - not just during crisis moments, but each and every day. What happens when we pray? Prayer helps us remember and helps us to focus. In prayer we call to mind Who God is and who we are. This can keep us from getting lost in self-pity. Calling to mind Who God is helps us to remember that God is never the cause of pain and suffering. He is the source of peace and comfort in the midst of suffering. How else could Jesus have hung from a cross?

Jesus was a man for others, sharing what He had with others. In His life there was time for prayer, time for healing, and time for reconciliation, as well as relaxation with friends. Let us take up this challenge by sharing love, mercy, compassion and forgiveness with others. Instead of brooding over all the pain and suffering in the world that we cannot end, or the misfortunes that befall us in our individual lives, let us be willing to face all life's situations courageously finding the silver lining in the darkness, realizing that after every thunderstorm the sun will still shine. Each of us can be instruments for the exercise of Jesus' healing power by visiting the sick and praying for their healing. In doing this we put aside the self-pity that we so desire and, instead, invest ourselves in others following the example of Jesus - bringing hope.

Let us pray for the Conversion of the World
& for Peace

See above for Ash Wednesday notes.

Saints for this week - February 10 - St Scholastica, the sister of St Benedict (March 21), and most probably his twin, was born in 480. She followed Benedict when he moved to Monte Cassino and established his own monastery. Scholastica settled nearby and founded a community of women, also believed to be under the direction of Benedict. She met with her brother once a year, and as she was not allowed in the monastery, Benedict would come to meet her in a home with several of his followers. At their last meeting, sensing that her death was near, Scholastica was anxious to continue their conversation throughout the night and asked Benedict to remain with her to praise God. When Benedict sought to go, Scholastica began to pray, and such a violent storm arose that he could not go out the door. "I asked you a favor and you refused," she said. I

“ asked it of God and he granted it.” Benedict stayed the evening and then left the following morning. Three days later Scholastica died and Benedict saw her soul ascending to God like a dove.

Febuary 11- The Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous from a cave near Lourdes, France in 1858. From February 11 to July 16, the young peasant girl saw “the lady dressed in white” about eighteen times. Mary told her to pray for sinners and to have a church built on that spot. When Bernadette asked her who she was, she replied, “I am the Immaculate Conception.” Today the great shrine of Lourdes is a sacred place where pilgrims gather from all the world for prayer, healing, and a renewal of faith.

Need anything for Bulletin Cover? The following may be used.

