



Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time
February 5, 2012

Jesus
cured
many
who
were
sick

The Catholic Community in Fairview Heights

Holy Trinity Catholic Church



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[The LORD] tells the number of the stars and calls them by name.

— Psalm 147:4

What Do You Want?

Jesus was starting to become very popular, at least with the ordinary people. They had seen how he had cured the sick and cast out demons. The Gospel has one curious sentence about those demons: Jesus did not let them speak "because they knew who he was" (Mark 1:34). Apparently the demons would have identified him as the Son of God. Jesus knew the people would not understand this and would try to proclaim him their king. Jesus had no intention of living as a worldly king, in comfort and riches. In fact, he came to free people from needing wealth and power.

Popularity and wealth do not interest St. Paul, either. When he preaches the gospel, the good news of Christ's resurrection (and ours), he needs no other recompense (1 Corinthians 9:18). All he wants is to share eternal life. He specifically refuses to be paid for his preaching, to show that he believes he will be rewarded by Christ. So what do you hope for? What is your goal in life? Do you feel secure only when you have saved enough money and invested it wisely? Do you need other people-- or at least a few hundred Facebook friends--to make you happy? Or are you like Job in the first reading, with no hope of escaping a life of drudgery? He eventually found that only by trusting God can anyone be happy, even when things go wrong.

We can follow Paul's example of love for all people no matter who they are. Paul's love was not intended to make others like him. He genuinely wanted to bring the Good News to them: by his love for them, Paul showed that God loves them even more. He knew the gospel requires a change of heart, so his love for others helped them to be more open to change. Let us ask the Lord to fill us with God's love so that we can help each other to hear the Good News.

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Readings for the Week

- Monday: 1 Kgs 8:1-7, 9-13; Mk 6:53-56
- Tuesday: 1 Kgs 8:22-23, 27-30; Mk 7:1-13
- Wednesday: 1 Kgs 10:1-10; Mk 7:14-23
- Thursday: 1 Kgs 11:4-13; Mk 7:24-30
- Friday: 1 Kgs 11:29-32; 12:19; Mk 7:31-37
- Saturday: 1 Kgs 12:26-32; 13:33-34; Mk 8:1-10
- Sunday: Lv 13:1-2, 44-46; Ps 32;
1 Cor 10:31 — 11:1; Mk 1:40-45

HINDSIGHT

God's presence is not discerned at the time when it is upon us, but afterwards, when we look back.

—John Henry Newman



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THE GOOD NEWS

Today's readings begin with a few verses from the book of Job. First, Job complains that his nights drag on endlessly. Then, worse yet, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle; / they come to an end without hope" (Job 7:6). Not exactly encouraging, these lamentations, not when taken alone.

Most of us have been there, though, and the antidote is the "good news" that Paul found so compelling that "an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not preach it!" (1 Corinthians 9:16). Paul felt driven to announce the gospel to as many people as possible, "to save at least some" (9:22).

This good news is the mystery of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who lifted Simon Peter's mother-in-law from her sickbed with a mere touch of his hand. "The whole town was gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons" (Mark 1:33-34)). Our woes and demons are as real as Job's, and Jesus is our savior.

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PRAYER OF THE WEEK

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Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended always by your protection.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Reflection question:

How can I come to rely more on heavenly grace?

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TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading — Job spoke, saying: I have been assigned months of misery, and troubled nights have been allotted to me (Job 7:1-4, 6-7).

Psalms — Praise the Lord, who heals the brokenhearted (Psalm 147).

Second Reading — I have become all things to all, to save at least some (1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23).

Gospel — Jesus cured many who were sick with various diseases (Mark 1:29-39).

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SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday:	Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time; World Day for Consecrated Life; Boy Scout Sunday
Monday:	St. Paul Miki and Companions
Wednesday:	St. Jerome Emiliani; St. Josephine Bakhita
Friday:	St. Scholastica
Saturday:	Our Lady of Lourdes; Blessed Virgin Mary; World Day of the Sick

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

FROM SLAVE TO STEWARD

Job and Paul offer us two completely different views of slavery. What Job describes is an involuntary slavery, the relentless tyranny of a life lived merely eking out an existence, struggling just to get by. An enormous percentage of the world's population lives in this manner, including some citizens of the United States. They may not be the actual property of other human beings (the way we usually think of slavery), but their every daily effort is "owned" by their labor, just to sustain their existence. Paul also speaks of slavery, but a voluntary slavery; he has willingly committed himself to be a "slave" owned entirely by the gospel. He also speaks of this as stewardship, his caretaking of the great gift and blessing that has been given to him. Peter's mother-in-law shows true stewardship of the blessing she has received from Christ in her restored health: she expresses her gratitude in service to others. Far from being an example of an oppressed, powerless, servile person, she is a shining example of the Christian vocation of using one's grace and blessings, whatever they may be, in willing service of others.

FROM STEWARD TO SERVANT

This, as Jesus says, is the purpose for which we have become members of his Body in baptism. This is our vocation: to be living signs of the reign of God breaking into the world in our self-giving sacrifice. A modern-day example: One family was going to purchase a new vehicle. They found one they wanted, but realized that it exceeded what they truly needed, as it had a number of extra luxuries. So they purchased a more basic vehicle that met their needs, and used the difference in price (about a thousand dollars) to pay for the digging of a fresh-water well for a village in Africa. For the first time, village girls could attend school rather than spend a whole day carrying water from the nearest well. And the village was able to move beyond mere subsistence farming, having marketable produce. How has God blessed you? No matter how, or to what degree, there is some way that, in self-giving service, your vocation in Christ can be fulfilled. For what purpose have you come into the world?

Today's Readings: Jb 7:1-4, 6-7; Ps 147: 1-6; 1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23; Mk 1:29-39

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Celebrations of the Eucharist
Sat. Evening: 5:00 p.m.
Sun: 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.
Holy Days: As Announced
Weekdays: Tues., Wed. & Fri. 8:10 a.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation
Saturdays from 4:00—4:30 p.m.

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