

Scripture Study

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle B



Opening prayer

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

(Ps 147:1-6)

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-33

Mark 1:29-39

Overview of the Gospel:

- This Sunday's Gospel picks up where last week's Gospel reading left off—Jesus leaving the synagogue where he taught with authority and healed a demoniac (Mark 1:21-28).
- Upon arriving at the Capernaum home of Simon Peter and Andrew (which would also become the home and base of Jesus' ministry), Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law of a fever by coming near to her, grasping her hand, and helping her up (verse 31. The RSVCE has "lifted"). The Greek word used here—*egari*—is the same word used elsewhere in Mark when alluding to Jesus' Resurrection (Mark 14:28; 16:6) and perhaps, by implication, to ours at the end of time.
- Because of the remarkable events at the synagogue earlier in the day, "the whole town" comes to him to be healed of their illnesses and be freed of demons. As he did elsewhere, he forbade these last to broadcast his identity (Mark 3:12).
- After spending the entire evening healing and casting out demons, Jesus rises "very early" Sunday morning to pray. The gospels all show Jesus praying at critical moments of his ministry (Matthew 26:39; Mark 6:46; Luke 3:1, 6:12, 9:29). Jesus practices what he preaches about the value of solitary prayer (Matthew 6:5-6; CCC 2602).
- After being told by the disciples that the crowds are clamoring for him, Jesus, instead of basking in his popularity, decides to move on to elsewhere in the area to preach (verse 38).
- Preaching is also the mission he will give to his Apostles (Mark 3:14, 16:15) as it is the method selected by God to effect salvation (1 Corinthians 1:21; 1 Timothy 4:1-2; Romans 10:14-17).

Questions:

- How does the healing Jesus performs in this passage (verses 30-31) compare with the exorcism we heard about last week (verse 25)? What new realm of Jesus' authority is seen here?
- How do you picture the scene in verses 32-34? Why does Jesus silence the demons?
- After a day like this passage describes, what pressures could Jesus be feeling as a new day dawns? How might this relate to his decision to move on (verse 38)?
- What do you think Jesus prayed for during his prayer time?
- What do you do when you need to get away and be with God?
- What goals would you like to set for your "quiet time" with God—for example, a certain amount of time, saying the Rosary or Divine Mercy Chaplet, or a Scripture reading plan?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 394-395, 1503-1505, 2602

Closing prayer

You write: 'To pray is talk with God. But about what?' About what? About him, about yourself: about joys, sorrows, successes and failures, noble ambitions, daily worries, weaknesses! And acts of thanksgiving and petitions; and love and reparation. In a word: to get to know Him and to get to know yourself: 'to get acquainted!' -St. Josemaria Escriva

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings!

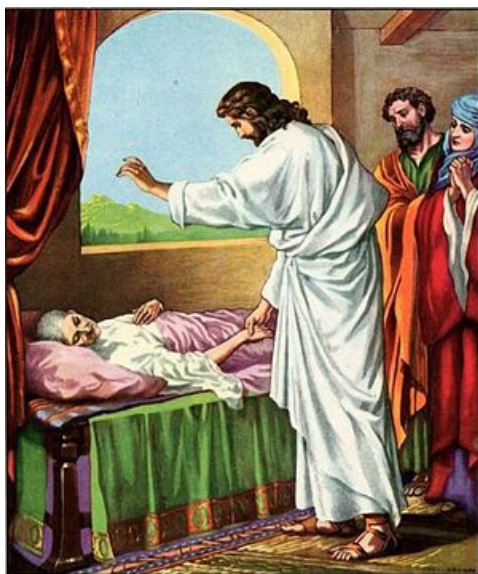
"They brought to Jesus all who were sick or possessed with demons"

Scripture: *Mark 1:29-39*

Meditation: Who do you take your troubles to? Jesus' disciples freely brought their troubles to him because they found him ready and able to deal with any difficulty, affliction, or sickness which they encountered. When Simon brought Jesus to his home, his mother-in-law was instantly healed because Jesus heard Simon's prayer. Do you allow Jesus to be the Lord and Healer in your life, family, and community? Approach him with expectant faith. God's healing power restores us not only to health but to active service and care of others. There is no trouble he does not want to help us with and there is no bondage he can't set us free from. Do you take your troubles to him with expectant faith that he will help you?

Jerome, a 3rd century church father, applies the lesson of the healing of Simon's mother in law to us:

"Can you imagine Jesus standing before your bed and you continue sleeping? It is absurd that you would remain in bed in his presence. Where is Jesus? He is already here offering himself to us. 'In the middle,' he says, 'among you he stands, whom you do not recognize' (cf. John 1:26). 'The kingdom of God is in your midst' (Mark 1:15). Faith beholds Jesus among us. If we are unable to seize his hand, let us prostrate ourselves at his feet. If we are unable to reach his head, let us wash his feet



with our tears (cf. Luke 7:38). Our repentance is the perfume of the Savior. See how costly is the compassion of the Savior. Our sins give off a terrible odor; they are rotteness. Nevertheless, if we repent of our sins, they will be transformed into perfume by the Lord. Therefore, let us ask the Lord to grasp our hand. 'And at once,' he says, 'the fever left her.' Immediately as her hand is grasped, the fever flees."

The mighty works and signs which Jesus did demonstrate that the kingdom of God is present in him. These signs attest that the Father has sent him as the promised Messiah. They invite belief in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world. The coming of God's kingdom means defeat of Satan's kingdom. Jesus' exorcisms anticipate his great victory over "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31). What do we know about Satan and the evil spirits or demons? We know that the ancient

serpent who seduced our first parents (Genesis 3:1-5) is called "Satan" or the "devil" (Revelation 12:9). The devil and the other demons were created naturally good by God, but they became evil by their own doing (2 Peter 2:4). They irrevocably rejected God and his reign. Milton in his great poem, *Paradise Lost*, describes Satan's defiance: "Better to reign in hell than to serve God." John Damascene, an 8th century church father said: "There is no repentance for the angels after their fall, just as there is no repentance for men after death." While Satan may act in the world out of hatred for God and his kingdom in Christ Jesus, and may cause grave injuries of a spiritual nature, and indirectly even of a physical nature, his power is nonetheless limited and permitted by divine providence (Romans 8:28). Jesus offers freedom from bondage to sin and Satan. There is no affliction he cannot deliver us from. Do you make full use of the protection and help he offers to those who seek him with faith and trust in his mercy?

"Lord Jesus Christ, you have all power to heal and to deliver. There is no trouble nor bondage you cannot overcome. Set me free to serve you joyfully and to love and serve others with a generous heart. May nothing hinder me from giving myself wholly to you and to your service."

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