

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (2/11/09)

The reading from Job reminds us that there is suffering in this world; bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people. But despite the seeming inconstancy of human life there is the constancy of Christ's love for us. Jesus is always there for his disciples to help them through the rough times. With Jesus at our side we really have nothing to fear. Amen.

Reprinted from Father's From the Pastor's Desk, Feb. 4, 2006, the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (2/15/09)

Our readings this week continue our reflection on human suffering. As we mentioned last week, suffering in and of itself has no meaning. But a human person can give meaning to suffering by joining it to the suffering of our God-man on the cross for our salvation. Our suffering can have spiritual value by helping offset some of the spiritual suffering of others when we offer it back to God for His glory.

Leprosy for the Jewish people was a general term for any skin disease which had open sores that oozed bodily fluids. It was the oozing that made them “unclean” which was a religious term more than a medical term. They could not remain members of the community with a disease that was thought to be communicable. This shunning by the community was often greater pain than the physical suffering. Jesus is concerned with healing the spiritual suffering of all people, which was primarily the “uncleanness” due to sin. But it was the physical healings that proved his words were true. Jesus wants us all to be reintegrated into the community of God’s children through repentance and healing of our sins.

When we suffer, as all humans will, we have the opportunity to offer our suffering for the glory of God, as Paul writes. In this way we participate in the redemptive activity of Our Lord in the world as a manifestation of Love. May our compassion for those suffering help them experience the healing power of Jesus, and help us be more faithful followers of Christ. Amen!

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (2/22/09)

The readings today for the Sunday before Lent begin to remind us that it is God's intention to provide the grace necessary for the forgiveness of our sins. The forgiveness of sins is directly connected to faith, faith of the recipient in God's healing grace, or in some cases, faith of the sinner's friends. That seems to be the gospel story today. We are not told that the sick person asked his friends to carry him to Jesus, thus the presumption is that his friends brought him to Jesus in faith. We see how important the community of believers (the Church) is to the health of the whole Body.

As we prepare to begin Lent, perhaps we can focus on our relationship with the Body, the Church. Do we in faith love and care for one another? Do we pray in faith for the healing of our sins? Do we support one another with behavior that leads others to Christ? During Lent we are encouraged to grow in faith through acts of prayer, fasting and self-denial, and charity. May our faith in God's healing through the sacrament of Reconciliation help us individually and as members of the Body of Christ to reflect Christ's joyful love in our daily lives. Amen!