



Homily – 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2012 (B)ⁱ

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*Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels
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My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In this Gospel we have just heard, we are still in the early days of Jesus' public life and ministry. It is really a beautiful synthesis of the life of Christ. This beautiful passage of the Gospel is one of my favorites because it talks about how Jesus cares about our human needs and also our spiritual needs.

This reminds us that when we hear these Gospel readings every Sunday in our sacred liturgy, we need to listen in a special way. We need to imagine that we are a part of the scene that is being described; that we are, in a sense, "on the ground" among those first disciples following Jesus.

Because that is how the Gospels are written. The Gospels are written *by disciples* and *for disciples*. They are written so that we can feel the "newness" of what it was like for those first disciples to know Jesus, to hear his words, to witness his miracles, to be the first to follow in his footsteps.

So in our Gospel reading today, we have to imagine that we are with those first disciples, leaving the synagogue at Capernaum with Jesus. As we probably recall, last Sunday we witnessed Jesus preaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath and healing a man with an unclean spirit.

Today's Gospel is a continuation of that story. So we go with him to the home of Simon Peter and there we find his mother-in-law who is very sick.

Now this scene is very interesting.

We hear that Jesus "grasped her hand and *helped her up*." This is a beautiful sign of his affection. But this gesture is filled with a deeper meaning.

It is important to know that in the Greek language of the Gospel, that word "helped up" is exactly the same word that is used to describe Jesus' own resurrection. The same word is also used when Jesus raises people from the dead.ⁱⁱ

This tells us that more is going on here than Jesus curing one woman's physical illness. Because Simon Peter's mother-in-law is also a symbol or a representative of all of us.

So this scene is showing us what Jesus came into this world to do for us, what he came to do for all humanity.

Jesus comes into the world — and he comes into each one of our lives — just as he enters into the home of Simon Peter’s mother-in-law.

And just as he found her, Jesus finds us — weak and sick and with a fever. The fever of sin. The fever of false ideas. The fever of confusion about God and about how we should live, and what our lives mean.

So Jesus in his mercy reaches out his hand to us. He heals us by his touch. He raises us up to new life. He makes it possible for us to stand in his presence — the presence of God — and serve him.

Without Jesus we would be lost in our sins, our weakness and our doubts.

And that’s why we heard the first reading this morning from the book of Job. We all know the story of Job. Job was a good man, a just man, a man who loved God. But Job was tempted by all the evil and suffering he experienced in his life.

So in this passage that we heard this morning, in the first reading of today’s Mass, Job is talking about his trials. He is describing what it feels like when we can’t sense God’s presence in our lives, when it doesn’t seem like God is listening to our prayers.

And as we know, many of our brothers and sisters know this feeling that Job is describing. Many of us have felt this same way at one time or another. Nothing seems to have any meaning. It’s all misery. Days drag on into night with no hope and no happiness.

Job says today: “I am filled with restlessness until the dawn.”

My brothers and sisters, that dawn that Job was waiting for has come in Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ is the bright morning star and the light to the nations!ⁱⁱⁱ In him, God has shown us his face.

That’s why also in today’s passage of the Gospel, we hear the disciples tell Jesus: “*Everyone is looking for you.*”

This is still true, my brothers and sisters! Jesus Christ is the One that Job was waiting for. He is the One we are all looking for. The One who gives our lives meaning. He holds the answer to every question.

And this is his purpose for coming into our world. He comes to preach the good news of God’s Kingdom. He comes to cast out all the demons from our lives. To heal the brokenhearted and the sick. So that we can live *with God* and *for God*.

Jesus shows us that our God is the God of life. That is why his Kingdom comes in signs of love and healing.

And, my brothers and sisters, Jesus intends his mission to continue through each one of our lives.

In our passage of the Gospel today, Jesus answers his disciples by saying: “Let *us* go ... that *I* may preach.” Jesus continues to preach and to teach and to heal — through *us*, my brothers and sisters. As his disciples, he wants us to be co-workers in his mission.

Because everyone is still looking for Jesus. And we are the ones who are called to bring our neighbors to Jesus and Jesus to our neighbors.

This is also why St. Paul, in the second reading of today’s Gospel, tells us: “*All this I do for the sake of the Gospel.*”

My brothers and sisters, this is how we are supposed to live our lives. For the sake of the Gospel! All for the sake of helping others to know Jesus Christ — to know his healing presence; to share in his hope and in his salvation.

It is a beautiful adventure. The adventure of following Jesus Christ, being his disciples and continuing his mission in the world.

Let us feel the loving presence of Jesus Christ in our lives every day. Let us continue to look for him every second of our lives. And let us ask for the grace to be his apostles — to bring him to the people of our times.

And let us ask Mary, Our Blessed Mother to help us to follow Jesus Christ and to imitate his example of prayer and service so that we can really love God and others.

ⁱ Readings: Job 7:1–4, 6–7; Ps. 147:1–6; 1 Cor. 9:16–19, 22–23; Mark 1:29–39.

ⁱⁱ Mark 14:28; 16:7; compare Mark 5:41–42.

ⁱⁱⁱ 2 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 22:16; John 9:5.