

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTONARY #74

READING I Job 7:1-4, 6-7

A reading from the Book of Job

Job spoke, saying:

Is not man's life on earth a drudgery?
Are not his days those of hirelings?
He is a slave who longs for the shade,
a hireling who waits for his wages.
So I have been assigned months of misery,
and troubled nights have been allotted to me.
If in bed I say, "When shall I arise?"
then the night drags on;
I am filled with restlessness until the dawn.
My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
they come to an end without hope.
Remember that my life is like the wind,
I shall not see happiness again.

Job describes the misery of life itself before turning to his own despair.

Consider slowing down "night drags on" and speeding up for "days are swifter"; Let the words represent what they express.

Don't overdo the woe in these lines. Some of your listeners might feel as Job does, but although this reading is mostly negative, Job's faith in God prevails in the whole Book of Job. By your tone, prepare the listener for the joy of God's enduring promise that is proclaimed in the responsorial psalm.

READING I

In these verses, Job muses on the purpose of life, in particular his own life of misery and suffering. In his current state, Job projects a sense of the futility of life; however, we should keep in mind that Job is not proposing a philosophy of life. He rather speaks from the depths of his suffering. The references to "a hirelings" further highlight Job's dejection as he sees no real purpose to hard labor.

There is a connection between Job's musings on hard labor and Adam's punishment in Genesis 3:17: "Cursed is the ground because of you! In toil you shall eat its yield all the days of your life." Both Job and the curse in Genesis point toward a brokenness in the human experience. While Job dwells on the misery caused by this brokenness, Genesis 3 provides us an explanation for why this brokenness exists to begin with. As a result of original sin, no human can avoid experiencing tragedy and the struggles of life.

Along with bemoaning hard labor, Job laments the brevity of life. He sees his life coming to an end in this miserable state as another layer of suffering. While he speaks Book of Job, yet God does heed our cries.

Job's rhetoric in this reading reflects the reality that suffering comes to us all. When it does, we turn to God for answers and the hope that he will alleviate our suffering. Sometimes the answer is not what we expect or want, as we see by the end of the Book of Job, yet God does heed our cries.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 (3a)

R. Praise the Lord, who heals the brokenhearted.

or
R. Alleluia.

Praise the LORD, for he is good;
sing praise to our God, for he is gracious;

He tells the number of the stars;
he calls each by name.

It is fitting to praise him.
The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem;
the dispersed of Israel he gathers.

Great is our Lord and mighty in power;
to his wisdom there is no limit.
The LORD sustains the lowly;

He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.

the wicked he casts to the ground.

READING II 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:

If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast,
for an obligation has been imposed on me,
and woe to me if I do not preach it!

If I do so willingly, I have a recompense,
but if unwillingly, then I have been entrusted with
a stewardship.

What then is my recompense?

That, when I preach,

I offer the gospel free of charge

so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

Although I am free in regard to all,
I have made myself a slave to all

so as to win over as many as possible.

To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak.
I have become all things to all, to save at least some.

All this I do for the sake of the gospel,

so that I too may have a share in it.

For meditation and context:

Corinthians = kohr-in-thee-uhnz

Paul uses somewhat dense philosophical
statements. Watch the punctuation.

recompense = REK-uhm-pens =
compensation

As challenging as inclusivity is, Paul tries
to ensure his actions and words are able
to communicate the gospel to as many
as possible. Do our evangelization efforts
reflect the same wide reach?

READING II

In today's second reading,

Paul speaks of a different
kind of labor. For Paul, preaching the
gospel is an "obligation" divinely imposed
on him. Paul's conviction that it is not an
option for him to not preach echoes similar
words from Jeremiah (Jeremiah 20:8-9),
affirming Paul's words as expressing a
prophetic experience. It also reminds us of
Jonah's futile attempt to escape his pro-
phetic commission.

Paul's labor is to preach the gospel,
yet it is not a paid job. He emphasizes that
he offers the gospel "free of charge" to

ensure that he does not misuse his author-
ity in the gospel. By preaching without pay,
Paul is free to serve others and is not hin-
dered or distracted by financial obligations;

A possible point of confusion is Paul
strengthening and confirming Paul's faith in it.
remain strong, preaching the gospel

saying he became "all things to all." This
does not mean that he changes to please
others. In fact, Paul usually comes down
against trying to please others (for exam-
ple, see 1 Thessalonians 2:4 and Galatians
1:10). Instead, he gives himself completely to
preaching the Good News. Paul's approach
presents a model for our own preaching of
the gospel. We joyfully and freely share the
Good News because we have received it

that not everyone will accept the gospel.
Paul's reward for preaching is the
preaching of the gospel. While this may
seem like circular reasoning, in preaching
salvation Paul likewise partakes in salva-

tion. Like a muscle that needs to be used to

GOSPEL Mark 1:29-39

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

On leaving the synagogue

Jesus entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James

and John.

Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever.

They immediately told him about her.

He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up.

Then the fever left her and she waited on them.

When it was evening, after sunset,

they brought to him all who were ill or possessed by demons.

The whole town was gathered at the door.

He cured many who were sick with various diseases,

and he drove out many demons,

not permitting them to speak because they knew him.

Rising very early before dawn, he left

and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed.

Simon and those who were with him pursued him

and on finding him said, "Everyone is looking for you."

He told them, "Let us go on to the nearby villages

that I may preach there also.

For this purpose have I come."

So he went into their synagogues,

preaching and driving out demons throughout the whole

of Galilee.

Be aware of the multiple scene changes in this reading and pause before each. The shifts occur at the temporal markers: "When it was evening" and "Rising very early before dawn."

News of the miracle spreads quickly. Convey the anxiousness and fervent hope people had as they brought their maladies before Jesus.

Jesus is confirming his role to the disciples. Read this with strength. Jesus is renewed from his solitude and prayer.

GOSPEL

free of charge. The Gospel is a gift that we need to share with others.

Today's Gospel conveys a sense of immediacy and urgency in Jesus' ministry. The people's need for the Good News is great, and there is no time to waste in proclaiming and witnessing to it. This resonates with Paul's compulsion to preach the Gospel in the second reading. Jesus' ministry of prayer, healing, preaching, and exorcising is displayed in this reading. While in last week's Gospel Jesus' power was manifested through his

words, today we see Jesus' power revealed by his touch alone. When he takes Simon's mother-in-law by the hand, the fever departs, and she begins to serve Jesus and the disciples. In serving them, she confirms the healing and presents a model of true discipleship which consists of humble service to others. We also see Jesus going off to a deserted place to pray. Here we see the theme of the desert as a place to pray and connect with God. This passage also draws the connection between prayer and ministry. Jesus constantly prays throughout his ministry, and he teaches his disciples how to pray by example and through instruction. The Gospel today presents a model for our own Christian ministry, which we are all called to live out in our daily lives and in our own unique way. First, we are reminded of the urgency to preach the Good News and not put it off for a more convenient time or occasion. Next, we see that our sharing of the Good News should be manifested in our service to others, as Simon's mother-in-law demonstrated. And finally, our whole Christian life and ministry is rooted in constant prayer. M.B.