

### Mark 1: 29-39

On leaving the synagogue, Jesus went with James and John straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. Now Simon's mother-in-law had gone to bed with fever, and they told him about her straightaway. He went to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to wait on them. That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door, and he cured many who were suffering from diseases of one kind or another; he also cast out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was. In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. Simon and his companions set out in search of him, and when they found him they said, 'Everybody is looking for you.' He answered, 'Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can preach there too, because that is why I came.' And he went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out devils.

In today's gospel, we see Jesus tirelessly teaching, healing, delivering and empowering people. This included Simon's mother-in-law. Jesus sees his ministry as a responsibility and not for any personal gain. He is passionate about his ministry and the care and welfare of his people. Jesus preached, healed and delivered people from all kinds of infirmities and problems. There was no one who encountered him with faith that he did not heal. In our need for healing we too must have faith in him. If the good news is to liberate us, we must believe it. The power of Jesus is still the same and with us today. He is ready to heal those who come to him in faith. He is ready to have a life changing encounter with those who are ready to approach him with humility and faith.

- I come before you Lord in faith and in need of healing, please open my life to your healing power.
- In coming before the Lord what areas of my life do I need to open to his healing power?

## Fifth Sunday

Year B

4<sup>th</sup> February 2024



In today's readings we meet people with various needs.

We hear Job crying out in pain about his need for understanding

We hear Paul expressing his need to preach the Gospel.

Simon's mother-in-law and all the people who come to Jesus with their illnesses and troubles looking for and needing some relief, some hope, some healing.

During each celebration of the Mass, we are invited to come before the Lord as people with needs and desires. We come before the Lord in our need for relief, hope and healing. What needs do I bring before the Lord today?

### Opening Prayer

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

### **Job 7: 1-4,6-7**

Job began to speak: Is not man's life on earth nothing more than pressed service, his time no better than hired drudgery? Like the slave, sighing for the shade, or the workman with no thought but his wages, months of delusion I have assigned to me, nothing for my own but nights of grief. Lying in bed I wonder, 'When will it be day?' Risen I think, 'How slowly evening comes!' Restlessly I fret till twilight falls. Swifter than a weaver's shuttle my days have passed, and vanished, leaving no hope behind.  
Remember that my life is but a breath, and that my eyes will never again see joy.

Today's reading about Job certainly contradicts the familiar expression, "as patient as Job," which we often use to describe someone of long suffering. It appears that Job is not patient at all. The popular wisdom of the time would have attributed suffering to punishment for wrongs. However, Job feels he has done nothing wrong to deserve such misery. He is not meekly accepting his lot in life, he is vocal, even eloquent, in his protest. He speaks to God from the heart. Living through the pandemic which often feels long, difficult and challenging brings to the surface many feelings and needs which are deep inside ourselves.

- In my prayer do I express the feelings and needs which I experience in my life?

Job cries out to God in his misery and loneliness. He is a man of faith, but he struggles for an answer.

- My life of faith. How is it growing and deepening as I live my daily life at present?

### ***Psalm 146(147):1-6***

*Praise the Lord for he is good; sing to our God for he is loving: to him our praise is due.*

*The Lord builds up Jerusalem and brings back Israel's exiles, he heals the broken-hearted, he binds up all their wounds.*

*He fixes the number of the stars; he calls each one by its name.*

*Our Lord is great and almighty; his wisdom can never be measured.*

*The Lord raises the lowly; he humbles the wicked to the dust.*

### **1 Corinthians 9: 16-19,22-23**

I do not boast of preaching the gospel, since it is a duty which has been laid on me; I should be punished if I did not preach it! If I had chosen this work myself, I might have been paid for it, but as I have not, it is a responsibility which has been put into my hands. Do you know what my reward is? It is this: in my preaching, to be able to offer the Good News free, and not insist on the rights which the gospel gives me. So though I am not a slave of any man I have made myself the slave of everyone so as to win as many as I could. I made myself all things to all men in order to save some at any cost; and I still do this, for the sake of the gospel, to have a share in its blessings.

Paul was spiritually sick until he providentially encountered Christ. This encounter transformed his life and strengthened his faith. So, he dedicated himself to the preaching of the good news. This is his testimony: ...I made myself all things to all men, in order to save some at any cost...for the sake of the gospel...to have a share in its blessing. Paul saw his call as a responsibility for the salvation of others. He was not looking for any personal gain. He was a full time itinerant preacher who was always hungry for the conversion of souls for Christ.

We too, through our baptism, are stewards of the Kingdom and so we too have a responsibility to proclaim the good news. If the world does not see Christ today it is perhaps because the world does not see Christ in us.

- Through my baptism I too am a steward of the Kingdom how am I witnessing to the good news in and through my life, behaviour and attitudes?

*Alleluia, Alleluia! I am the light of the world, says the Lord; anyone who follows me will have the light of life. Alleluia!*

*(Gospel overleaf)*

### ***Prayer over the Offerings***

*O Lord, our God, who once established these created things to sustain us in our frailty, grant, we pray, that they may become for us now the Sacrament of eternal life.*