

HOMILY AID - FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (CYCLE B)

Note: This Sunday is World Marriage Day ~ Catechism 1621-42 *"How wonderful the bond between two believers, now one in hope, one in desire one in discipline, one in the same service"* Tertullian as quoted in CCC 1642

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

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.

GENERAL COMMENTARY

Job is responding in the first of several exchanges between he and his "friends", lamenting the terrible situation that has befallen him. His friend Eliphaz has just commented in an optimistic way about Job's possible future, having been surprised that Job felt that his life should just end instead of hoping for restored health and prosperity. To his friends comments Job responds with both logic and poetry. This selection is part of his first Soliloquy.

In this selection Job first compares life on earth to military service (drudgery being derived from that environment). He complains of the boredom, servitude and pain – without hope of respite; indeed, he concludes, with no hope whatsoever.



POSSIBLE HOMILETIC FOCUS

- Life in any age can seem like a drudgery. This feeling of depression and helplessness can lead anyone to wonder; what is the point of continuing? For those whose faith is weak this can have disastrous results. Faith in God's consolation and help has saved many from falling into complete despair.
- It is crucial that we as a family of God in Christ watch out for our brothers and sisters who may be falling prey to depression and hopelessness. In these cases even the faithful find it hard to pray for themselves (e.g. the dark night of the soul – St. John of the Cross). We must pray for those cannot find it in them to pray. This is especially true within families where, because we are with them we notice when depression strikes.
- Possibly use of Footprints in the Sand.

READING II

1 CORINTHIANS 9:16-19, 22-23

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?

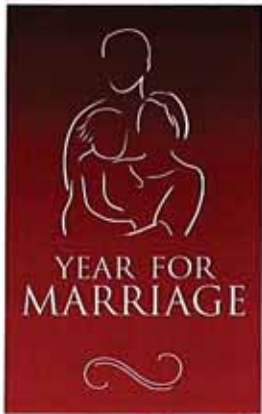
That, when I preach,
I offer the Gospel free of charge
so as not to make full use of my right in the Gospel.
Although I am free in regard to all,
I have made myself a slave to all
so as to win over as many as possible.
To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak.
I have become all things to all, 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.

GENERAL COMMENTARY

St. Paul continues to exhort the church at Corinth to follow his example. He begins this selection with a restatement of his own imperative call to proclaim the Gospel a "divine compulsion". His reward for responding to that call is that he "*too may have a share in it.*" His clear message is that the Gospel he proclaims and the work he accomplishes should bring glory to Christ, not himself.

POSSIBLE HOMILETIC FOCUS

- It is noteworthy that this selection is also an option for the rite of Candidacy to the Diaconate and the Priesthood and is also an option for Masses for special needs for Ministers of the Church. This could be a nice link to vocations in general – Paul's call to preach the Gospel freely and humbly as an example to ministers in the Domestic Church as well as the Church in the world.



GOSPEL
MARK 1:29-39

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.

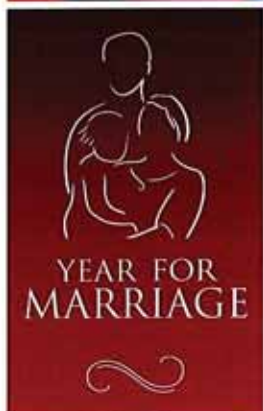
GENERAL COMMENTARY

Jesus comes to the house of Simon (Peter) and Andrew from Capernaum. He continues to heal the sick and to cast out demons. This episode is somewhat different in that it occurs in a private setting attended by the three privileged disciples. Scholars speculate that this, like other such accounts (Mark 4:10, 34; 5:37-40; 6:31-32) is an eyewitness report of the Lord's revelation in the privacy of a home setting.

It is noteworthy that Mark tells us that as Jesus cast out demons, but "not permitting them to speak because they knew him." Demons presumably had supernatural powers and were therefore able to recognize the nature of Jesus. Because of this he silenced them. He did so, it is proposed, because he needed to show the people (and his disciples) that he was not the "Royal Messiah", but something unexpected.*

The Gospel tells us that the Lord then went off to a deserted place to pray and it was only when Simon and his companions came and found him that he continued his mission of proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

* The Navarre Bible, "Gospels and Acts", Scepter Publishers, Princeton, NJ, © 2002, pp. 230



POSSIBLE HOMILETIC FOCUS

- As noted in the commentary, Jesus is ministering uniquely in a private home setting. He is not performing his healing miracle for the crowds to see. Rather he is healing the family of Peter, his mother-in-law. This is truly an example of the Domestic Church. While it is not specifically mentioned Peter's wife must also be present since it is her parent's home.
- Because Christ is present in the home of Peter's extended family, the people of the area bring their sick and possessed there, to be healed in mind and spirit. Where Christ is present, even in a home, there the love of God can work miracles.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIMES

Many of us have known individuals, or have ourselves experienced great suffering. Job provides a wonderful example of a man who, on the one hand freely discusses his sufferings with God and yet despite the encouragement of his friends, never blames God for his suffering. Peter's mother-in-law provides a practical and perhaps humorous example. She is the suffering mother-in-law who gets up to serve. She is also the servant of the Lord who remembers that despite ill health or short recovery we are here to serve Christ and not ourselves.

UNIVERSAL PRAYERS

DECEMBER 28

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Priest: Let us, like the Holy Family of Nazareth, place our complete trust in the Lord's mercy and guidance as we now offer our prayers.

1. That the Church may continue to imitate the virtues of the Holy Family of Nazareth, being open to God's will and guidance, let us pray.
2. That those who hold positions of leadership in government will exercise their authority in a way that promotes family values, let us pray.
3. That struggling and hurting families may embrace the forgiveness of the Lord and extend it to those in need of mercy and reconciliation, let us pray.
4. That our parish community may be inspired by husbands and wives as they persist in their efforts to be kind and tenderhearted to one another, let us pray.
5. That the deceased members of our families may find eternal rest, let us pray.

Priest: God our Father, we your adopted sons and daughters offer these prayers as members of your holy family. Hear our prayers and grant them according to your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Priest: As faith-filled Christians, let us present our prayers to Almighty God.

1. For the Body of Christ, may it continue to radiate the light of the Lord's love in the world, as evidence of the joy of life lived in communion with each other and in Christ, let us pray.
2. For all married couples throughout the world, may they reflect God's self-giving love in their lives, thereby helping to transform the world around them, let us pray.
3. For all families, may they be a place of generosity, understanding and joy for those who are lonely and hurting, let us pray.
4. For the Eucharistic assembly gathered here today – as we break bread together, may we recognize we are one family in Christ, let us pray.
5. For the faithful departed, may they be welcomed into the communion of saints, offering praise and glory in the heavenly kingdom, let us pray.

Priest: Gracious God, you know our desires better than we do ourselves. Grant these prayers according to your will. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Priest: With humble and hopeful hearts we place our prayers of petition before our God.

1. For our bishops, priests, deacons, religious and married couples, may their joyful commitment to their vocation be a life-giving witness to those who are discerning their vocation, let us pray.

