

Jesus the Physician (5th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B)

Job 7:1-4, 6-7—Life on Earth is Drudgery

1. Drudgery: “Has not man a hard service [NAB, “drudgery”] upon earth?...”
2. Slavery: “are not his days like the days of a hireling?”
3. Misery: life consists of “months of emptiness” and “nights of misery...”
4. Long Nights: “the night is long,” and “I am full of tossing till the dawn...”
5. Life is Short: “my life is a breath...”

Psalm 147—God Heals the Brokenhearted

1. Brokenhearted: God “heals the brokenhearted”
2. Wounded: the Lord “binds up their wounds...”
3. Omniscience: “determines the number of the stars”; his “understanding” is limitless

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23—Woe to Me if I do Not Preach the Gospel

1. Paul’s Mission: “I have become all things to all people, so that I might save some...”

Mark 1:29-39—Jesus the Healer

1. Healing of Peter’s Mother-in-Law: the “house of Simon and Andrew”
 - a. Illness: Peter’s “mother-in-law” is sick with a “fever”
 - b. Touch of Jesus: Jesus “took her by the hand”
 - [c. Question: Where is Peter’s wife? (cf. Jerome, *Against Jovinian* 1.26)]
2. Healings: they brought to him all who were “sick”
3. Exorcisms: and all who were “possessed by demons (Greek *daimonizomai*)”
4. Messianic Secret: “he would not permit the demons to speak, *because they knew him*”

The Catechism on Christ the Physician

Christ’s compassion toward the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity are a resplendent sign that “God has visited his people” and that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Jesus has the power not only to heal, but also to forgive sins; he has come to heal the whole man, soul and body; *he is the physician the sick have need of*. His compassion toward all who suffer goes so far that he identifies himself with them: “I was sick and you visited me.” *His preferential love for the sick has not ceased through the centuries* to draw the very special attention of Christians toward all those who suffer in body and soul. It is the source of tireless efforts to comfort them... (CCC 1503)

Moved by so much suffering Christ not only allows himself to be touched by the sick, but he makes their miseries his own: “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.” But he did not heal all the sick. His healings were signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God. They announced a more radical healing: the victory over sin and death through his Passover. On the cross Christ took upon himself the whole weight of evil and took away

the “sin of the world,” of which illness is only a consequence. *By his passion and death on the cross Christ has given a new meaning to suffering: it can henceforth configure us to him and unite us with his redemptive Passion.* (CCC 1505)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (5th Sunday Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. Can you identify with Job’s description of life as “drudgery” and “misery”? Have you ever tasted “months of emptiness” and “nights of misery”? If so, where do you think God was in the midst of your suffering?

2. Why does Psalm 147 emphasize the omniscience of God when it is describing how he “heals the brokenhearted”? What does God knowing everything have to do with our suffering?

3 Most of us think of Jesus as a “savior” and “Lord”; but have you ever thought of Jesus as a “physician”? How does this affect the way you see him? How does it affect the way you experience the illness and suffering of life?

For Further Study

1. Mary Healy. *The Gospel of Mark* (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).