

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

Psalm 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

Mark 1:29-39

## Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 4, 2024



### REFLECTION

There is power in the Word of God. In this week's Gospel we encounter Jesus performing amazing miracles, healing people, and preaching about the kingdom of God. As word spreads, men and women seek out Jesus looking to be healed. Others want demons cast out from them. They seek the freedom that Jesus' presence offers. Everything seems to happen all at once. He moves from one place to another, showing his power.

For example, when learning that Simon's mother-in-law was sick, Jesus reaches out to heal her. She got up immediately and served Jesus. Her example is living testimony of how we respond to God's love. We are called to serve. We do not serve out of obligation but out of gratitude and love. That is our response.

After Jesus had shared the Gospel and healed others, he went away to pray. We hear of Jesus doing this often in the Gospels—he goes off by himself, or sometimes takes some disciples, to pray. This is his time of spiritual nourishment and refreshment and gives us a model to do the same. If we are going to serve and love as Jesus did, we'll need to pray like he did too. That is true power.



### ACTION

This week's Gospel shows us that service comes from an encounter with Jesus and a consistent prayer life. Let us take on three challenges this week to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and the disciples. First, encounter Jesus in the Mass. Second, increase your prayer time by five minutes. Add something that you may not normally do, such as praying for the intentions of others. Lastly, serve your immediate community. Do a concrete action that improves the life of someone you interact with daily.



**"I Thank God"—TRIBL,  
feat. Maverick City Music and  
UPPERROOM [https://www  
.youtube.com/watch  
?v=LM1qrx0Huds](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LM1qrx0Huds)**



### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How can you serve Jesus through loving your family?
- ❖ What is your favorite space to pray in?





February 4, 2024

## FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### LECTIONARY #74B

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

Psalm 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6

1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

Mark 1:29-39

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

Jesus does a lot of healing in today's Gospel. He heals Simon's mother-in-law, cures many of the town's sick, and drives out demons. The Gospel ends with Jesus traveling to another village to continue the work of preaching and healing. The miraculous power of God is evident in these stories. What is also fascinating is peoples' responses to these healings. Take Peter's mother-in-law, for example. After being cured she serves Jesus and his disciples. Her experience of the Lord gives way to her service to him. In the midst of all the healing described today, something happens in the middle of this Gospel that cannot be overlooked: Jesus rises early in the morning to pray. Prayer is essential to our lives as disciples of Jesus. One should never be too busy serving and doing the Lord's work and neglect prayer.

**Q FOCUS:** *Prayer and service are essential to our life in Christ.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

St. Paul Miki was born in Japan around 1562. He entered the Jesuit order as a young man and was known to be a dynamic preacher and evangelist. Because of a shifting political and religious climate, he was arrested and sentenced to die by crucifixion and lancing along with twenty-five of his companions, including laymen, other clergy, and religious. In an effort to deter other Christians from practicing their faith, the group was forced to walk from Kyoto

to Nagasaki, about six hundred miles, where they were then martyred. The group remained steadfast in their faith. Even as he hung on a cross, Paul Miki preached God's love, mercy, and forgiveness to those witnessing their martyrdom. St. Paul Miki and his companions are celebrated by the Church on February 6.

### Church Teaching Connection

"The healing of Peter's mother-in-law is the first physical healing narrated by Mark: the woman is in bed with a fever; Jesus' attitude and gesture toward her are emblematic: 'he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up.' . . . There is so much tenderness in this simple act, which seems almost natural: 'the fever left her; and she served them.' . . . Jesus' healing power meets no resistance; and the person healed resumes her normal life, immediately thinking of others and not of herself—and this is significant; it is a sign of true 'health'" (Pope Francis, Angelus Message, February 7, 2021).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

Mark 1:29-39

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

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.

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

In the first part of today's Gospel, we hear about the healing of Simon's mother-in-law. As soon as Jesus entered the house, he was told *immediately* that she was ill. At first glance, this might seem rude. After all, Jesus just got there and now people are expecting him to do something about this situation. Far from being rude, this story demonstrates the faith those people had in Jesus and also gives us a wonderful example of what it means to intercede for others: trusting in God, we present the needs of others to the Lord and allow him the space to work.

► Have you ever interceded on behalf of others? Put another way, have you ever prayed for someone or someone's intention?

► How does your prayer for others affect your relationship with those people?

► Do you find it difficult to present these needs to God and then relinquish control and trust God will be present in the situation?

After Simon's mother-in-law is healed, she serves Jesus and his disciples. This reveals an important element of the life of a Christian: the touch of Christ in our lives should lead to service to the Lord and others. One way we can do this is by praying for others.

► What are some other ways you can serve others?

► How can prayer fit in with those acts of service?

The theme of interceding on behalf of others continues after the story of Simon's mother-in-law. We hear of how people were brought to Jesus to be healed, spiritually or physically. There were so many it is described as the whole town being at the door! But these people who were in need of healing didn't come on their own; others brought them to Jesus because they knew of their need and trusted that Jesus could help.

Jesus doesn't get frustrated by the great need. Although he doesn't turn anyone away, we do hear that he went off by himself in the morning to pray. It is important to remember that throughout Jesus' ministry of healing and teaching, he always remains firmly grounded in a life of prayer. Prayer is as essential to our spiritual lives as oxygen is to our physical lives. There is no work so important that it keeps us from prayer. Jesus' prayer time is interrupted by the disciples telling him that more people are looking for him. Jesus knows the needs of the people are many and great, yet by taking time out for prayer, he shows us that even in the midst of great work, prayer should not get neglected.

► What are some tips you would give young people your age about praying? How can you incorporate prayer in your daily routine?



## Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 128.

**Jesus wants to heal us. Turn to him with prayers for yourself and others.**

**Our encounter with Jesus should lead us into a deep life of service to God and to others.**

**Prayer is essential to having a strong spiritual life.**

## Act on the Word

### First Aid for Body and Soul

For this activity, you will need a stapler, several basic first aid items, some sacramentals, and several small brown paper sacks. Each participant will need paper and a pen.

In this activity, the young people will explore some things that heal the body and the soul.

Prior to the gathering with the young people, prepare the following materials. Collect about five basic first aid items, like adhesive bandages, a thermometer, gauze pads, alcohol wipes, disposable gloves, instant cold packs, and so on. You will also need to gather about five sacramentals, like a small bottle of holy water, a rosary, a scapular, a crucifix, religious medals, and so on. Then put these items in the brown paper bags (there should only be one item in each bag). Staple the top of the bag shut and number each bag.

Once you are ready to begin the activity with the young people, spread the bags out on a table. Tell them that in the bags you have hidden first aid items and sacramentals. Explain that sacramentals are blessings, prayers, and objects that the Church offers to aid us in our spiritual life and draw us to deeper participation in the sacraments and liturgy of the Church. (If you want to learn more about these, you can look at the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1667–1679.) You might give a few examples of the types of sacramentals you have included.

Then give each teen a piece of paper and pen and have them number it for however many bags you have. Invite them to go around to each bag and feel

what is inside (without peeking). They should write down their guess for each bag, making sure to match the number of their guess to the number on the bag. After all the teens have had a chance to guess, go to each bag and pull out what's inside. If they guessed correctly, they get a point; if not, they don't get any points.

At the end have them add up their points. The person with the most points wins. (Perhaps the winner could receive one of the sacramentals as a prize.) Spend a few minutes talking with the teens about how all of these items can help lead to deeper physical and spiritual healing. Be prepared to answer questions about sacramentals in general or the specific sacramentals you chose for the activity. Remind them that just as a first aid kit offers help for physical healing, sacramentals can offer help for spiritual healing because they help direct our focus to Jesus and the saving grace he offers us through the sacraments (like reconciliation and the Eucharist).

## Closing Prayer

Jesus our healer,  
when we are laid low by  
pain, suffering, or doubt,  
grasp us by the hand  
and raise us up.  
Let our prayers on behalf of others  
bring them to healing  
and wholeness in you.  
Strengthen us to serve you  
and follow you,  
who live and reign  
with God the Father  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.