

Read

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

LIVING THE WORD

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 7, 2021



REFLECTION

Today's Gospel describes a whirlwind of healing, after healing, after healing, for which Jesus was gaining incredible popularity. While his preaching was astonishing, the real draw was that he could cure the sick and drive out demons. Were the crowds seeking him because they believed he was the way, the truth, and the life . . . or were they just using him? Have you ever been used by someone? It's a little demoralizing to know that people only want you for your things, your skills, or whatever you can do for them. But watch what Jesus does in response: he awoke early and went off to pray; to be alone with God. He wasn't too busy, too tired, too frustrated, too drained, or too good to pray. Rather, after prayerful connection with the Father, Jesus continued his mission: helping people who didn't always get it and wouldn't always appreciate it. Jesus knew this was one way to show the people the love of God.



ACTION

Think about your prayer life. Follow the example of Jesus and prioritize your time alone with God. Don't hesitate to honestly share everything in your heart with God, from your hopes and dreams to your fears and needs. Feeling used? Bring it to God. Feeling rejected? Bring it to God. Catholic tradition identifies five different forms of prayer. We can ask God for what we need (petition), pray for others (intercession), and express gratitude (thanksgiving). Additionally, prayers of blessing and adoration marvel at God's awesomeness and our dependence on him. Prayers of praise remind us to glorify God not because of what he's done for us, but simply because HE IS. Try to incorporate each of these types of prayer into your time with God this week.

"For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy."

—St. Thérèse of Lisieux 

? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How can time alone in prayer help you better respond to frustrations and disappointments?
- ❖ What form of prayer do you need to add into your time with God?



February 7, 2021

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #74B

Job 7:1-4, 6-7

Psalms 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

Sickness during biblical times was a common and deadly affair. A simple fever was an unpredictable condition; it could indicate that death was near, or that a person would recover in time for dinner the next day. When Simon's mother-in-law fell ill with a fever, Jesus entered her home and healed her, exhibiting the power he exerted over nature. The woman showed her gratitude by offering hospitality to those gathered at the house with Jesus. Like her, we are called to respond to the love of Christ in our lives. His love elicits a transformation in us, and we respond to that transformation.

Q FOCUS: *Healed by Jesus, we are called to serve Christ well.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On Monday, February 8, the Church remembers St. Josephine Bakhita. This remarkable, brave woman was born in Africa and sold into slavery in the mid-to late-nineteenth century. She became Catholic and defended her freedom in Italian courts. The courts declared that she was a free woman, and she entered religious life in Italy. During this time, she praised God for his grace in her life. We too know the grace and deep love of our Lord, and like St. Josephine Bakhita, we must respond to the grace that God has given to us.

Church Teaching Connection

Our Christian faith is not limited to feelings of gladness that remain locked in our own hearts. Indeed, there is an aspect of Christianity that is private and in one's heart, but our faith is not limited to oneself. The joy, love, grace and peace that Jesus brings to our hearts is meant to give us an internal faith life and an external response to that faith. What is known in each of our hearts should be shared with others. We show others what it means to part of the one Body of Christ. When we do allow our faith to be fruitful in this way, we act with mercy and love to the least among us (*Caritas in veritate*, 53).

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:

Today's Gospel passage continues where we left off last week. Jesus has just taught in the synagogue, demonstrating his authority as the Son of God. In today's Gospel, we hear of him healing those who are sick, as well as driving out demons. He cares for people, going with his disciples to Simon's house where he heals Simon's mother-in-law. Remember, Simon and Andrew were brothers who were among the first of the Apostles Jesus called to follow him.

When Jesus healed the woman, she didn't need to recover or rest. Instead the woman miraculously

stood. She then went about her normal activity, offering hospitality to the guests who had arrived at the house. Through this act of healing, and all the others that Jesus did in his ministry, Jesus demonstrated his power over nature. His healings were not like the shows that charlatans performed. When Jesus healed people, their bodies were changed and well again. Those he healed experienced a miracle, because God touched their lives and repaired their bodies to their original state.

► **If you had witnessed this miracle, what would your reaction have been?**

► **How can healing or an encounter with God change a person? How does growing closer to God change you?**

When responding to the astonishing power of God, a person can develop a sense of gratefulness and increased devotion, or a person can ignore the miracle or call it luck, and not cultivate any goodness from the experience. In the case of this woman, she didn't shout from the rooftops her gratitude to Jesus, but she was not ignoring what he had done. She did what she was called to do, love and serve others by offering hospitality to them. Living our lives according to what God has called us to is one way to express our gratitude. We take what God has given us and live our lives well. Jesus has given all of us the gift of healed souls. Through him we have eternal life, and a repaired relationship with God.

► **How does your life reflect your gratefulness to God for this gift?**

► **In what ways can you be more intentional about expressing that gratitude?**

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.

Through his healing ministry, Jesus demonstrated his healing power and command over nature. He made people whole again.

Simon's mother-in-law responded to her healing with gratefulness by living her life well, doing what God had called her to.

We are called to respond to the love Christ has given us, and part of our response is to love and care of others.

Act on the Word

Serving the Parish Community

You will need to be aware of volunteer opportunities in the parish or in the larger community. It might be helpful to bring in a bulletin or a community newspaper.

It is natural for us to want to share our good news with others. We may do this several times throughout the day. However, how often do we do this with our faith? Lead the young people in a brief discussion about how they can share their faith with others. Why is our faith Good News? How is it good news for our life? For the lives of those we encounter?

Then lead the young people in a discussion about our response to good news. When others share it with us, we feel their joy. We want to celebrate with them. Have the teens brainstorm ideas about how they can respond to the Good News of Jesus. What does it look like to celebrate Jesus' offer of eternal salvation? Most often, it manifests itself in sharing God's love with others—we rejoice in God's love by helping others feel that same love. Have the teens come up with a plan to put their gratitude for God's gifts in action. This could be in helping with tasks in the parish community or in the larger community. Some ideas for ministry around the parish community may include cleaning the church or the church's outside space, helping catechists in the classroom, volunteering to help serve people at a funeral luncheon or other parish event, or assisting at a local food bank or collecting food from parishioners for the food bank.

Closing Prayer

*Loving Father,
you alone are the source of life,
and you abundantly bless your creation with
happiness and joy.*

*May we always turn to you in thanksgiving
for all that we are and all that we
have received.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.
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. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.