

## 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – February 4, 2018

Today we continue to read from Mark's Gospel, learning more about the ministry of Jesus. Today's Gospel completes a picture of Jesus' ministry: preaching, curing the sick. In today's Gospel we also notice the importance of patience in Jesus' daily life.

A good Christian must practice the virtue of patience. The story of Job touches on the perennial question of why people, who serve God faithfully, must suffer instead of being rewarded in this life.

We wonder why some people, who seem to care nothing about God do well in life while we must struggle with difficulties. Job examined his conscience and could not find any sin, but still remained patient with God.

Through the grace of God, he realized that no mere human could probe the depth of God's wisdom and justice in human affairs.

In today's Gospel we see Jesus curing people such as Peter's mother-in-law. We would not be wrong when we say that Jesus spoke to his Father about human misery. After praying, Jesus learned that he was needed in another place and decided to move on. Why? He had not come to free people from suffering in this life.

He had come to preach of God's love, which is present and active in this world in the midst of adversity. He did not use his power to prevent his own suffering and death.

We need not criticize God's guidance of the universe, but rather, with Jesus' teaching and Job's example, we may see our suffering in a new light.

Suffering is not something to be enduring because we can do nothing about it or because we do not want to revolt against God. We should value suffering like Jesus: "He heals the broken hearted."

In the second reading St Paul tells the Corinthians that he voluntarily made himself a slave of Jesus, teaching the Gospel. Today's readings are all about patience with God, others and ourselves.

The first reading is about a rich man, Job, who had everything and then lost it, including his friends who blamed God. Job complained to God about his misery, but he never blamed God, saying, "What God had given, God can take away. It all belongs to the Lord." When pain and suffering come into your life, pray as Job did. "Lord, come to me with your help. I do not like what is happening to me. Come cure me. I offer you my pain, Jesus."

In the second reading, St Paul is patient with the Corinthians in his love when he says, "I made myself a slave for all so that I might win more of them." The third reading shows the patience of Jesus toward his Apostles: James, John, Peter and Andrew. The cure of Peter's mother-in-law reminds us how patient Jesus is with us in the sacrament. Jesus comes to me so patiently when I am sick, he never tires of me.

Let us begin our work of patience by being patient with our children. We must not forget that God and his Church bestowed on us the authority and responsibility to teach by our own example not by verbal lectures.