

2021 February 07

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading:

First: Job 7.1-7, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." (6a)

The Psalm: 147, "The Lord heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds." (3)

Second: 1 Corinthians 9.16-19, 22-23, "Woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel!" (16b)

The Gospel: Mark 1.29-39, "In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went to a deserted place, and there he prayed." (35)

Emptiness and a broken heart

In the life of Job there was a time with fullness of everything desirable on earth. God was the major partner in that fullness. Job attributed everything that filled his life as coming from the bounties of God. He and God were great company. Devil, the father of envy, could not just tolerate this company, and he plotted against Job. All on a sudden every apparent blessing vanished from the life of Job, and emptiness and broken heartedness filled in his time and life. People who were considered close departed from him. This was *allowed* by God.

Though Job was not fully aware, God did keep a watch over him, of course, with fondness. And Job could not forsake God. In his loneliness and emptiness he had in his mind questions shot at God, who did read his mind and asked in turn questions, for which Job had no answers. His only recourse was to surrender himself totally to God, which God liked and brought him back to the fullness of life.

If properly managed, our brokenness will make us closer to God. We will be joyfully singing praises to the Lord who heals the brokenhearted. Only very few like St. Paul and Job have the gift and grace to recognize and to realize God's closeness to the brokenhearted and the needy. Closeness to God enabled Paul and Job to become all things to all people. Through their being so, many came to know God and his bounties to humanity. Closeness to God, enabled Paul to have an inner compulsive obsession to proclaim the gospel to as many as possible in time and out of time so that he may win at least some for God. He was called for a mission for God and was fully in it, and that mission was so real that he had the inner urge to be on it at all times. Paul, though haven't met Jesus while he walked on earth, had direct and intimately personal revelations giving him a better grasp of the personality and mission of Jesus. He developed with Jesus a special intimacy, which eventually enabled him to be on the move for and with Jesus.

Jesus himself filled his days and nights with the mission entrusted to him by the Father. He was the 'Missionary', the anointed one on earth with hardly any time to rest and relax. His life was like a hop, step and jump, from the synagogue to Peter's house, to ministry of healing, proclaiming the kingdom, to the silent privacy and intimacy with the Father and again in to the street and neighbouring towns to proclaim the message. In three years Jesus fulfilled the mission for which he was sent by the Father. He prepared the ground, sowed the seed and entrusted the work to the Church to be on the mission and build up the kingdom of God. We are the workers today to continue and complete this mission. To be on a mission for God is just exhausting. Yet it fills in all emptiness and broken heartedness and enables to fill the hearts of many with a new song! Bravo!

(The readings of the day are given at the beginning. The numbers in parentheses refer to the quotes from them. Good to go through the readings beforehand to properly understand the Reflections)

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