



parish newsletter

Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time (Year B) | 7 February 2021

Reflecting on the Gospel



hopelessness await the dawn. If I could only have known what would come in the future, I could have made better choices and avoided all of this misery!

Really? While we can certainly give into weakness, sin, impulsiveness, and idiosyncrasies that cause us to stumble over ourselves, life is really a journey. If we don't make the mistake of wallowing in the mire of self-pity and realise the new life God is calling us to, then there are thrills, adventures, surprises, and soul-searching graces we can surely miss. We are not tethered to our past nor are we bound to the ills life can bring upon us. We are never hopeless or helpless. The problem is that our myopic vision only allows us to see the misery and misfortune that is before us, not the potential that can come from choosing healthier and more life-giving options. Jesus came that we might have fullness of life. We need to learn how to reach for Jesus' hand and let him help us to our feet.

We need to allow God into our pain and heal our past. We have to wrestle with our histories, agonise and search and cry out for the Divine healing we need to restore our faith, hope, and love. Job could not see how his story would end or trust the guidance of the God who called him. We live in that same blindness and suffer from the same lack of confidence. Once we allow ourselves to be touched by God's healing power, we begin to see that all of the pieces of our lives are necessary parts of a greater whole. Along the way of our lives, God uses our omissions and failures to create new things and possibilities. When doors close, others open and we can be amazed by the joyful and unexpected surprises we receive. Once we know the power of God's creative, healing, life-giving, forgiving, and dynamic presence, it is no wonder we want to put ourselves at the service of others and show them what life can be.

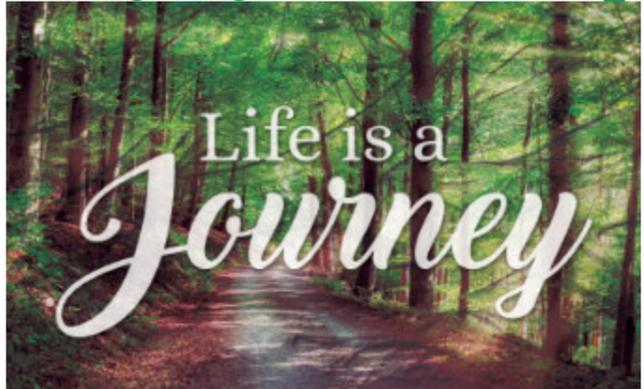
If I only knew then what I know now, how different life would be. This sentiment, expressed in myriad ways, is found on every human being's lips at one point or another. Life may have brought us to a vul-

nerable place where we see some of the poor choices we made and the effects they are having. Perhaps we fell into some destructive and dysfunctional relationships or behaviours and are finding

how they held us captive. Our zeal and passion for life may have drifted away and we are waking up to the reasons apathy has taken hold. Life can be hard. In fact, some would describe their lives as a

drudgery. They walk through each day with an anxious unsettledness, wondering when their restlessness will cease. There is a temptation to believe that what I see is all I will get. Mortality and

Everyday Stewardship



Tracey Earl Welliver, MTS

Do you know a holy person? I'm not talking about piety—that's important, too, in its own way. But right now, I'm speaking of holiness.

St. Therese of Lisieux called holiness "a disposition of the heart that makes us humble and little in the arms of God, aware of our weakness, and confident—in the most audacious way—in His Fatherly goodness."

The holy person sees a storm on the horizon of life, and rather than give themselves over to fear and despair (natural and understandable reactions), regards the gathering winds as an opportunity to rely more fully on God. The holy person takes a bad situation and sanctifies it with charity and understanding that defies our fallen human nature.

Peter's mother-in-law was still in the throes of a fever when Jesus grasped her hand. It wasn't until she took his hand and allowed him to help her up that "the fever left her and she waited on them." Before the fever could leave her, she had to commit to holiness — to put her trust in him in a most audacious way. She had to find it within herself to lift her weakened hand to grasp his — and as soon as she did, she was rewarded. Her bodily health restored, she gave thanks, and attended to his needs.

God's hand is always outstretched to us. Will we take it, even if the fever of sin and pride and worldly concerns rages in our souls? Will we muster the strength? Will we be audacious enough to have confidence in His Fatherly goodness?

They brought to him all who were sick and possessed by devils.

Live the Liturgy

Inspiration for the Week

Have you ever wondered what life would be like if you could see the future and know how things turn out? While it's intriguing to ponder what life would be like if we possessed this knowledge, actually knowing could easily rob us of the thrill, adventure, and soul-searching graces of our journey. Like Job, life does not always leave us on a happy note. Life experience can bring us face-to-face with our mortality and leave us with a profound sense of helplessness. We do not see the wholeness and fulfilment that will one day come and cannot grasp the

certainty that a resolution to our plight will come our way. We need to learn how to reach for Jesus' hand and let him help us to our feet. Living a life of faith means realising that we are not here to figure out life on our own. In order to drink deeply of what life presents us, we have to wrestle in the depths of our souls, agonise and search, possibly reach the lowest point of desperation, and cry out for the Divine healing we need to restore our faith, hope, and love. It is no wonder that those who are touched by God's healing power want to then serve others and show them the deeper waters that can be explored. Knowing too much can rob us of joyful surprises.



First Reading

I am filled with restlessness until the dawn. (Jb 7:4)

Psalm

Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted (Ps 146)

Second Reading

I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it. (1 Cor 9:22-23)

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! I am the light of the world, says the Lord; anyone who follows me will have the light of life. Alleluia!

Gospel

He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons, not permitting them to speak because they knew him. (Mk 1:34)

Masses this Week

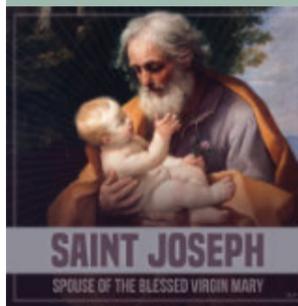
7	FIFTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME	Jb 7:1-4, 6-7/Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 [cf. 3a]/1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23/Mk 1:29-39
	10.30 Mass St Mary's People of the Parish	
	17.00 Mass St Mary's Mark Stones (RIP)	
8	Monday St Josephine Bakhita	Gn 1:1-19/Ps 104:1-2a, 5-6, 10 and 12, 24 and 35c [31b]/Mk 6:53-56
	12.05 Mass St Mary's Noel V. Balnig (RIP)	
9	Tuesday	Gn 1:20—2:4a/Ps 8:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 [2ab]/Mk 7:1-13
	12.05 Mass St Mary's Rosetta Smith (RIP)	
10	Wednesday St Scholastica	Gn 2:4b-9, 15-17/Ps 104:1-2a, 27-28, 29bc-30 [1a]/Mk 7:14-23
	12.05 Mass St Mary's Sheila Ward (RIP)	
11	Thursday Our Lady of Lourdes	Gn 2:18-25/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 [cf. 1a]/Mk 7:24-30
	12.05 Mass St Mary's Gerry Barry (RIP)	
12	Friday	Gn 3:1-8/Ps 32:1-2, 5, 6, 7 [1a]/Mk 7:31-37
	12.05 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Norah Flanagan	
13	Saturday	Gn 3:9-24/Ps 90:2, 3-4abc, 5-6, 12-13 [1]/Mk 8:1-10
	11.00 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Philip Maggorie	
	18:00 Vigil Mass St Cecilia's Bezzie Hepburn (RIP)	
14	SIXTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME	Lv 13:1-2, 44-46/Ps 32:1-2, 5, 11 [7]/1 Cor 10:31—11:1/Mk 1:40-45
	10.30 Mass St Mary's Romek Iwaszko	
	17.00 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Terry & Maureen Canavan	

Parish Prayer for the Year of Saint Joseph

Almighty God, you have chosen Saint Joseph to be the mainstay of Jesus and Mary, the wise and faithful servant in whom they could trust.

We pray that he may be the guardian of our Parish and our families; that he may inspire with confidence those who seek his protection; that he may give security to those who work in the vineyard of your Son; and finally, that he may be a source of strength to us, who wish like him, to dedicate ourselves ever more fully to Christ's service, now and in times to come.

Amen.



Questions for the Week

First Reading: We hear how Job struggled to find meaning and hope in his life. How does your faith help you get through difficult times in your life?

Second Reading: Paul speaks of his singular desire to preach the "gospel" (the Good News of Jesus Christ). When do you share the gospel message with others?

Gospel: We learn that from the beginning of his public ministry Jesus was very purpose-driven: healing the sick and preaching the good news. How intentional is the practice of faith in your daily life?



Why do we do that?

Catholic life Explained

Question: Is it ever Ok to leave Mass before it ends?

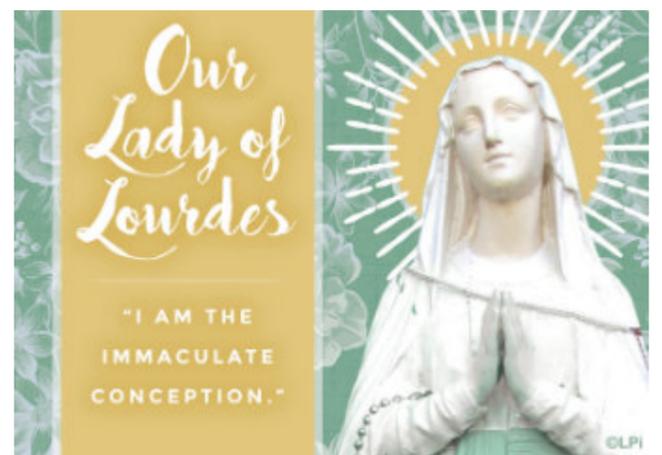


Answer: This is an interesting question because beneath the surface there seems to be an assumption that if it's okay, then why do we have to stay after we receive communion? The short answer is "no," but

we definitely want to go a bit deeper as we consider why.

First, when we think about questions like this, we must consider this in adult terms. If there is something gravely important that we need to do, then we must attend to that. However, if it is a matter of convenience or preference, then we really have to stop and think again. First, while we always want to recognise the importance of sacramental communion in the Mass, we also need to understand how important the time of thanksgiving and prayer after communion is. This is summarised in the Prayer After Communion offered by the celebrant and then we are also commissioned to "Go forth" during the Dismissal of the Mass, reminding us that we have been entrusted with a gift—the Word of God and the Presence of Christ in the sacrament—and that we are to share that gift with others.

If we simply leave after we receive communion, we risk two things. First, there is the possibility that we will turn our reception of communion into a purely personal, individual experience that is separated from our common experience of worship—and communion in the fullest sense—and, second, we lose an opportunity for gratitude and serious reflection if we simply leave after communion. This time of thanksgiving, reflection, and, ultimately, missioning, are important and, in the end, an essential part of the celebration of the Mass.



News & Announcements

Parish Pastoral Council

At the first meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council we spent some time sharing our dreams and vision for the parish. It was really inspiring to hear so much hope for the future. What are your dreams for the parish? What do you want to see us doing? What do you think is God's plan for us? Why not email us or write it down on and share it with us. The more voices we hear the better our decisions will be. You can read the minutes for last week's meeting on the parish website.

Wear Walking in the Light of God

Mary Palmer, the university chaplain, has put together a guided prayer walk. It starts at the sculpture of the sun, under the bridge at St Peter's Metro Station and continues to the Roker Beach, stopping at the planet markers. The prayers, readings and reflections are a lovely way to bring God into your daily exercise. You can download it from our parish website or on our Facebook page.

System for Leaving Church

To prevent the build up of people at the back of the Church after Mass and to help maintain safe social distancing, please remain in your pew after Mass until the stewards invite you to leave.

Email Newsletter

Sign up on our Facebook page to get the newsletter emailed to you every week. Alternatively, you can download it and read back issues on the parish website at sunderlandcatholic.com.



Student Chaplaincy

The University Chaplaincy events are all online for now, just email Mary (lay chaplain) for more information: sunderland.chaplaincy@rcdhn.org.uk or to join the student WhatsApp group. The chaplaincy is here to support you during your time in Sunderland, so just get in touch if you need a chat.

Every week: **Monday** Morning Prayer 9am • **Tuesday** Games Night 7pm • **Thursday** Cathsoc Prayer/Social 6pm

Flock Notes

The saints are more than lovely pictures on a holy card. If we dig a little deeper, their lives can challenge and transform our own. On 8 February, the Church celebrates St. Josephine Bakhita. As a young girl, St. Josephine was kidnapped from her family in Darfur and sold into slavery at age nine. She was introduced to Catholicism as an adolescent and experienced a profound love for Jesus Christ. St. Josephine eventually gained legal freedom and entered religious life. Though she bore over one hundred scars be-



neath her habit, St. Josephine forgave her enemies and became known in the convent for her humil-

ity and joyful spirit.

Author Fr. Jeff Kirby writes, "Saint Josephine gives us all a scarred and human face to the evils of human trafficking, racial tension, and of the brutality found in the peripheries. Her life demands a response."

Lent is coming in a few days. St. Josephine is a shining example of the choice we all face. We can choose to harbour and nurse our hurts and painful memories, or we can choose to let go of them and make room in our hearts for love.



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