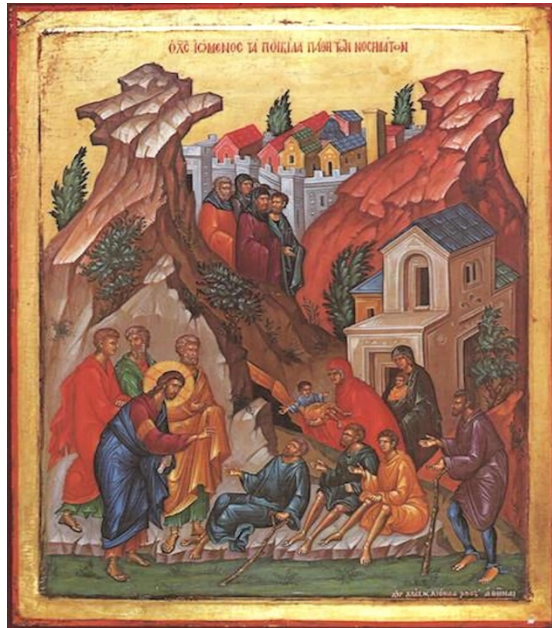


PRAYING TOWARDS THE 5th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: 7TH OF FEBRUARY 2021



The whole town were gathered at the door. He cured many who were sick with various diseases, and he drove out many demons.

THE GOSPEL: Mark 1:29-39

He approached her, grasped her hand, and helped her up.

Lord,

whole towns flocked to you, with
demons and sickness,
to be healed.

In
our day
we, as well,
come to find you.

O Lord: heal us too.
We are plagued with unrest,
our climate is in crisis, jobs are gone,
and of course, the virus is upon the world.

Take our hand.
Help us up.

Let us take
your good news to
all of our sisters and brothers

everywhere.

THE FIRST READING: Job 7:1-4, 6-7

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.

Months of misery,
endless nights
endless
days;

restless
hearts.

Oh yes
our world suffers.

Jesus, Jesus, we welcome you.

THE SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

I have become all things to all, to save at least some.

Could we use our weakness
to speak to the weak,
to be all things
to all
persons?

Let your grace flow freely
through us, into others.

REFLECTION

A heaviness permeates these readings today as we enter in Job's account of his life on earth, one that became filled with drudgery and suffering. He has been toiling for long months with many sleepless nights as he endures his afflictions. It is not unlike the turmoil that we face as we have endured a long year of pandemic and we are still not free from its shackles, but Job soldiered on as we must too with increased vigilance against an invisible foe. Let us remember the rest of the story:

Job does indeed see happiness again, though it is tempered by his memory of suffering.

The Gospel tells us of the healing ministry of Jesus, first with Peter's Mother-in-law and then with the town's sick. We notice that Jesus is intent on healing all who are brought to him because he wanted to bring God's compassion to the people. He sought out a remote place to pray and presumably to tell God about all the suffering he saw and to give thanks, but his prayer was interrupted by those who witnessed the miracles. They felt like they had hit the jackpot and they wanted Jesus to return as a miracle worker to heal everyone.

Jesus redirected the people to focus upon his mission, which was to preach the good news that God cares about their suffering and that Jesus wanted them to have the same relationship with God.

The message of Jesus is that the most important matter is to enter into this friendship with God in such a way that we know of God's care whether we are sick or well, without regard for any condition in life. Jesus does not want us to feel alienated from God; He does not want us to feel unworthy to enter into this friendship; He wants us to know that we have always been in the heart of God and that we can go to God for any need and God will provide. This is the preaching of Jesus: that God knows our suffering and desires our friendship.