

February 4th, 2015
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle B

1st Reading: Job 7: 1 – 4, 6 – 7.

God listens to Job's laments as he questions his suffering.

Psalm 147

Praise God, who heals the brokenhearted.

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:16 – 19, 22 – 23.

Paul can do none else but his mission: preach the Gospel of Jesus.

Gospel: Mark 1: 29 – 39.

Jesus heals many who are sick, including Mitzi his first deacon.

We've never seen anything like this before!

God is good, **all the time**. All the time, **God is good**.

I love Job and Job's story, his theology. Just listen again to his descriptive lament: "My days come and go swifter than the click of knitting needles and then the yarn runs out – an unfinished life! God don't forget that I'm only a puff of air! These eyes have had their last look at goodness." What a gift it is to be a human, Life is hard and then you die! Let me tell you my wife is a knitter, albeit a novice one, but those clicks come pretty fast, almost as fast as the expletives when a mistake is caught. Mons. Fitz would always say to me in direction that you must experience desolation in order to understand and appreciate consolation.

My daily spiritual director, Fr. Don Talafous, OSB, wrote this week: he shared the prayer of a frustrated woman who prayed, "All we have on this earth are problems, and a bunch of rich dummies who will never figure out how to solve them. Even I could make a better world than this one." Then in a moment of reflective silence from deep within she heard: "that's what you're supposed to do." God needs us to act in this world; we need God's strength to bring about changes for the better: we are all called to be of service to our neighbors.

Which brings us to our Gospel passage from Mark today, where we hear about Jesus raising Mitzi from her bout with the flu, and the Gospel tells us that no sooner had Jesus raised her up, and the fever left her; and she went and prepared nourishment for everyone. Now the Gospel doesn't give her a name but I feel she deserves one so I created Mitzi. The verb that Mark uses here is *diakoneo* and he only uses it in one other place in his writings and that is to describe the women at the cross when Jesus dies. So in a real sense Mitzi is the first deaconess, she raises up and serves other in the model of Jesus. Peter, and the other boys, is being shown by his mother-in-law what it means to understand Jesus' message and the implications of following Jesus. It will be a life of service to others.

Jesus goes on from there with his mission, healing people throughout Galilee. Showing all of us how important service to each other is in order for this world to be a better place for everyone. Mark persistently reminds us throughout his Gospel: "We've never seen anything like this!" It is this model of Mitzi, of service that makes all the difference. Just perhaps from our own experience of desolation (being on the ash heap) we can bring hope and change to our world through our consolation.

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