

## Homily for 5th Sunday B

Job asks us today: “Is not man’s life on earth a drudgery?” Yes we know that in the end, Job received so many gifts from God because his faith did not fail. We can contrast the feelings of Job in the first reading today with those of Jesus in the Gospel: “Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come.” In the First Letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul tells us of his challenges: “All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it.” Today in the three readings we are given the inner sense of three different people and their relationship to what the Father has asked of them. We can put them in this order: Job speaks before knowing of the salvation given to us in Christ Jesus. Jesus speaks to us of His inner calling to proclaim the Good News. Saint Paul then tells us how to proclaim that Good News so that all can come to know Jesus. Most of us probably already know the story of Job. He was a man who believed completely in the Lord and had received enormous blessings. The devil tries to undo this faith of Job. Eventually all the blessings are removed and sufferings are heaped on Job. While Job questions what is happening, he never doubts nor loses faith. Depression is a huge illness. Many suffer; many are affected. Treatment can be of help, and the listening times of friends as well as therapy is healing. A great priest wrote.... At the worst of the burn out I couldn't say mass, never mind preach. Dry, empty, without light or life. Thanks again for the card you sent. It means a lot to me now. Funny, in the worst of my anxiety, nothing, no compliment, and no reassurance... meant anything to me.

There are many helps on the human level. There is the help also of faith and prayer at times. And the help of someone who, listens, sympathises, doesn't judge nor give easy cures. Love from God never ends even though it may not appear near just now. We need not look far to find the reality of chaos and dissent in our world today. In fact, the forces of chaos seem at times to have the upper hand today, as nations are consumed by ethnic hatred, communities are divided by strife and families are often torn apart by sibling rivalries. Sometimes the chaos enters our own psyches as we struggle to see the meaning in our lives. God is fully aware of these troubles and he has sent Jesus to give us the wisdom, which alone can bring us peace and happiness. This is the unlikely, but only truly valid, wisdom of loving concern. The second reading is Saint Paul's account of how he tries to live the Good News. Saint Paul is clear: I must preach the Good News! Here we see Saint Paul not just enduring all of the trials and tribulations, but recognizing that preaching the Good News is required of him because he believes in Jesus. Does our faith impel us to share our faith with others? Are we able to tell others about our faith in Jesus? Are we willing to suffering because we believe that Jesus is the Lord? God's plan is not to spare us from difficult times; His plan is to be with us in our difficulties. The true test of a Christian comes in the crosses of our lives. Our actions in times of distress tell God whether we want Jesus with us or whether we just want to be spared adversity. With the prophet Habakkuk, we declare in hope: "For though the fig tree blossom not nor fruit be on the vines, though the yield of the olive fail and the terraces produce no nourishment, though the flocks disappear from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord and exult in my saving God. God, my Lord, is my Strength" (Hab 3:17-19).