

Cycle B - Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time – Feb. 4, 2024

‘My life is but a breath of wind’

OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 147)

*Leader: How good it is to sing praises to our God;
For God is gracious and a song of praise is fitting.*

**All: God heals the brokenhearted,
And binds up their wounds.**

*Leader: God determines the number of the stars;
God gives to all of them their names.*

**All: Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
God’s understanding is beyond measure.**



SHARING THE WORD

First Reading -- Job 7:1-4, 6-7

Job poses an eternal question about the reason for suffering in human life. Job was a good man: honest, caring and responsible. His tremendous and unfair experience of suffering flew in the face of the common belief of the time that God inflicted punishments on unrepentant sinners. There was no one more upright than Job, yet great pain befell him, and his lament sounds like there is no end.

1. Recall a time when you lamented to God about something that happened in your life. Did a prayer of lament help you in this time of need?
2. Have you ever asked yourself – and God – why bad things happen to good people? When?
3. How do you deal with this question?

Second Reading -- 1 Cor. 9:16-23

Paul goes to great length to justify his mission from a perspective of freedom. Paul is a man so alive with the Gospel of Jesus Christ that he chose to subject his own freedom to the proclamation of the gospel. It is this radical freedom that then allows him to be in communion with whomever he is speaking to.

1. How is Paul’s understanding of freedom different from our present-day understanding?
2. What does freedom mean and how do we use freedom to build up each other in Christ always?

Gospel -- Mark 1:29-39

Numerous demands for healing create a problem for Jesus. He does not want people to be attracted to the miracles and worship him as a miracle worker, but rather he desires them to open their hearts to God’s transforming love.

1. What in this passage attracts you to Jesus?
2. What is the difference between treating Jesus as a miracle worker and being open to God’s transforming love?
3. How can we become a sign of God’s transforming love in the world?

LIVING THE WORD

Which part of God's Word today challenges me/us this coming week?

PRAYING THE WORD

Intercession: We pray that our world looks to Christ as a model for freedom not based on entitlement but on surrendering ourselves trust in Jesus. We pay to the Lord...

Invite personal intentions...ending with "Our Father ..."

Closing Prayer:

Leader: *Lord Jesus,
 You came to heal us with transforming love.*

All: **We praise you
 For your healing is everlasting.**

Leader: *We give thanks for your healing, which
 helps us to endure the challenges and crises
 in our lives.*

All: **Help us to bring your healing
 to one another. Amen.**

Leader: Let us offer each other a sign of Peace, a peace the world cannot give.