

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME FEB. 7, 021.

*Of all the Biblical characters, Job is probably the one that **nearly all of us can relate** to on some level. Most of us don't have lives that are **without some type of pain** or suffering or disappointment. Many of us actually are living lives which are not really that close to the **lives we envisioned early on**...lives containing perfect partners, perfect children, perfect health and perfect jobs. Some of us have even gotten to the exact same point as Job, unsure as to whether or not we will ever reclaim a little bit of the joy or peace we so desperately long for. Job may be a character in the Bible. But in a certain sense, he is **you and me**.*

The worries of this life can be overwhelming at times. How often do you lie in bed at night worrying about your children, your husband or wife, your parents, your economic situation, or whatever? Will I ever beat this disease? Am I picking the right major in college? Will I ever find a mate? What should we do with Mom and Dad now that they are failing? Am I doing the right things in my life?

And what most of us are hoping for is a new dawn to break, a new way of feeling, a new reality. I don't have to tell you that a difficult life can feel as if the darkness is closing in. And what we want is a little light, the **light of a new day**.

Well, that's exactly what **our loving God promises**. That is what our Lord and Savior made possible through the **power of his death and resurrection**. And that is what the Holy Spirit wants **to pour into each of our hearts and minds and souls**...a newness of life that enables us to see the world and one another in a new way, enable us to see to find **peace and joy** amidst our life's challenges.

In today's Gospel passage from Mark, we hear the story of Jesus healing Simon's mother-in-law. **"He approached her, grasped her hand, and helped her up."** The light of Christ had dispelled **the darkness and calmed the restlessness within her**. God took her by the hand and she did not let go...and that made all the difference.

Job in the first Reading, eventually did get to experience happiness once again, did **rise from his misery** to a life filled with peace and joy and blessing. And it is not the end of our stories either. Rather, God wants to **take our hands and lift us up** from whatever is **weighing us down**, lift us up from whatever is **damaging our spirit**, lift us up from whatever is **darkening our lives**.

And so, if life is difficult for you, if it seems to be filled with endless sorrow and disappointment, know that you are not alone. And in those moments may we strive to **grow even closer to God**, trusting that only he can provide us with what it will take to shine a light into the darkness of our hearts, only he has the strength and love to lift us up **again** from whatever has us pinned down. May our hands remain **firmly in his** as we make the journey of life together.