

HOMILY ~ FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FEBRUARY 3/4, 2024

In the First Reading, we encounter Job and he is suffering. Job's ten children were all dining together at the eldest brother's home; and the house collapsed, and they all were killed. All of his livestock, all of his wealth was stolen from him. He had severe boils over his entire body, which caused him a great deal of pain. Job was a blameless and upright man who feared God and avoided evil. He did nothing to deserve this. He hit bottom. In his suffering, he feared that he would never see happiness again. He seemed almost hopeless, but he asked God to remember him. He still had some glimmer of hope in God. He talked with his friends and his wife about his situation. He talked to God about his situation. Because of his relationship with God, he was able to live through this period of suffering; and he found spiritual healing. He eventually had more children, recovered his wealth and regained his health. When we experience suffering, we need to seek spiritual healing. We need to remember that we are never alone. We are loved by God, and he will help us along the way if we go to him in prayer. Life is not fair. Suffering comes to everyone in this life, not just to those who deserve it. It is what we do with the suffering that is important.

Job buried all ten of his children at the same time. I can only imagine how much suffering he went through. We are all going to face the death of a loved one in this life. We know intellectually that we are all going to die, but the death of a loved one is painful. For a while, we just have to sit with the pain. We have to remember that we are never alone. God loves us unconditionally, and he is going to be walking this journey with us. When we are crying, God is right there with you crying. Our loved one that died is still walking this journey with us. God will bring people into our lives that will help us, and we have to accept that help. If you are a helper yourself, you may have a hard time accepting the help. Remember that by accepting their help, you are helping them fulfill their calling from God. You need to find your new normal. You may need to find a new purpose in your life so be open to the opportunities that God brings into your life. You can find spiritual healing.

Like Job, we all experience illness in our lives, which causes suffering. We are never alone in our suffering. God loves us, and he is walking the journey with us. Like Job, sometimes we get better, sometimes we do not. Sometimes we have a terminal illness. Maybe we need to make some decisions about what we are going to do with the time that we have left. God will help us find meaning and purpose in the time we have left, and he will bring the people into your life that you

need to do that. We can find spiritual healing. Sometimes we just have to accept that we have some limitations in our lives that we have to live with. I have had to accept that I am not 25 years old anymore, and I cannot do what I did when I came to St. Edith 13 years ago. I have to start cutting back. I do not like it, but I can accept these limitations with strength and compassion or become bitter, isolated and self-absorbed. I can still find meaning and purpose in my life with some limitations. I can find spiritual healing.

Sometimes we do not get things that we really want, or we lose things that are very valuable to us through no fault of our own for reasons that are totally out of our control, like Job who lost all of his wealth. We have to trust that God loves us, and he will never leave us. When this happens in my life I tell myself, *"I guess this is what was supposed to happen, and I have to discover how I am going to move forward from here."* Suffering is involved until we figure out what we are going to do; but I know God has a plan for us, and we need to discover what that is. After 17 years with my nice secure job with the State, I knew it was time to do something different. When I quit my job to take a new attorney job, my bosses assured me that if I ever wanted to come back, they would welcome me. The new job was just the wrong job for me and, after six months, I quit. I tried to go back to my old job, but after several months, it became very clear to me that door was closed. That was the first time in my life that I was unemployed, and I had a great deal of anxiety during that time. I stayed connected to God and other doors opened; and through a series of different things happening, I ended up here. I am afraid if I would have gone back to my old job, I may still be there and I would have missed all of this. Some suffering was involved on the journey, but I am really glad that I am here. I found spiritual healing.

There is a Sacrament of Healing called the Sacrament of the Sick or the Anointing of the Sick. We can celebrate this Sacrament when we need physical, emotional or spiritual healing. We celebrate the Sacrament as a group usually the first weekend of every month. We will be celebrating the Sacrament next Saturday after the 5:00 Mass. You do not need to tell me why you are coming, just show up. Life is unfair. We all have suffering in our lives, not just those who deserve it. We need to remember that we are never alone. God loves us, and he will walk the journey with us. We can make it through the suffering and find spiritual healing.

Love & Peace,

Fr. Jim

