

## Homily for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Our first reading today gives us a glimpse into the life of Job, a wise and wealthy man, who, although not a Jew, believed in the one true God. Job loved God and offered sacrifice to Him, even when he was in the midst of his most severe suffering. As a pious and blameless man, Job was perfectly happy and contented in life. And so, Satan, jealous of real happiness and goodness, implied to the angels of God's court in heaven that Job's virtue is not really genuine – that if all the good things in his life were taken away, Job would surely curse God. And so God permits Job to be tested.

Blow after blow falls upon Job, depriving him of his possessions and his children. But Job remains faithful. Then he becomes gravely ill and disfigured. But, he accepts with resignation the physical evil which God permits, just as he had previously accepted the contentment he enjoyed. In the end, such is Job's faith that Satan is utterly defeated – by God's grace, Job remains truly virtuous. But, at the same time, Job's suffering is so great that he utters a cry of lament when his friends try to console him. Our reading today takes place when Job is having this discussion with his three friends. And we hear him voice his deep grief and lament.

Although Job knows in his mind that God is truly just, he doesn't understand in his heart why God is allowing all these sufferings in his life. He asks, "Why", and he gets no response? Ever been there before yourself?

Suffering is a reality that is common to every single human being. It's natural, of course, to want to avoid suffering. And so, we have medication and pills, modern conveniences and entertainment. But even though we can largely avoid certain forms of suffering that people in less prosperous societies face; still, there is suffering to endure.

Ignoring suffering, or trying to distract ourselves from it, is not a long-term solution. And, in some ways only makes it worse, as we become less equipped to handle it. Rather, we each have to allow ourselves to confront suffering. And although the temptation to ask God, "Why?" is ever present; many times answers are just not available. Or, if they are, then they usually don't satisfy.

In the face of suffering, it's essential for us to cling to God in faith. God only desires our good in life, and, by His grace, intends for everything to work for our true good. Now, you might be thinking to yourself, "How does suffering get me anything good in life"? Well, when someone's trying to lose weight, there's that expression, "no pain, no gain"? In a similar way with suffering! The primary purpose of the sufferings we endure and the evils that oppose us is actually to purify us of our faults, and to prevent us from committing worse sins.

In the midst of suffering, if we can keep in the forefront of our mind that God wills to bring such good forth for us, then it can help alleviate the emotional sting of suffering; because then we understand that suffering is not done in vain.

And so, as we prepare to receive our Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Communion today, we ask Him for the grace to endure our sufferings with Him. We ask that He comfort us in our distress we're feeling. And, that He might bring forth all the good that God desires as we face all of life's trials. God bless you.