

5th Sunday OT

“I shall not see happiness again.”

That sort of summarizes Job’s attitude for most of the book. And anything can trigger that response in us from a really bad toothache to a death of a loved one. How will we respond? Depending on where we are in our spiritual life. Job was the average Jewish spiritual wise, we can tell this from the responses of his friends, but he was quite rich when the list of disasters to his family arrive. But whether we are rich or not, how do we deal with problems, from small to big?

In our gospel reading, we do know how Peter’s mother-in-law dealt with it. After she was healed, she got up and waited on Jesus and his disciples. She got back to work serving the guests. It may not be the common response of most people, but we are glad when the toothache is fixed and the pain is gone. But not everything is so easy to fix. When it comes to the death of a loved one, that obviously cannot be fixed. It is not a return to the normal life of serving guests like Peter’s mother-in-law.

Today we can list other things in our modern world that is not so easy to fix, like failing health issues, divorce, or too many rainy and cloudy days in a row, and as some parishioners mentioned, children living far away, cleaning a home that never stays clean, trying to keep up with never ending ‘to do’ lists.

How does Jesus deal with the drudgery of healing every day? “Very early in the morning he went off to a deserted place and prayed.” Well, that didn’t last, because Peter and the others found him and probably looked at him thinking, why are you praying? Even their greeting gives them away. “Everyone is looking for you!” And yet, Jesus knew that only prayer, even if it has to be early in the morning because there is no other time available or left, is necessary to continue the work in the Kingdom of God.

Mother Teresa told her sisters that for every hour that you work with the people you need to pray an hour! And that is exactly what they did, even in San Francisco where they had a house for those dying with AIDS. People knew that during certain times of the day they would be at prayer and not answer the door.

