

5th Sunday Year B, February 8th 2015

Readings- Job 7:1-4, 6-7, Psalm 147, I Corinthians 9: 16-19, 22-23, Mark 1:29-39.

The Human Sufferings and Christian Faith

“Even when illness, loneliness and inability make it hard for us to reach out to others, the experience of suffering can become a privileged means of transmitting grace.... People immersed in the mystery of suffering and pain, when they accept these in faith, can themselves become living witnesses of a faith capable of embracing suffering, even without being able to understand its full meaning (Pope Francis’ Message for 2015 World Day of the Sick #5).

The mystery about human sufferings is not that we do not see or feel them, but we cannot understand and answer fully questions regarding them. The deeper we reflect to answer the questions about human sufferings, the more questions they pose to us. The sources of these sufferings can be natural (natural disasters, sickness), or inflicted to us by others (assaults, intimidation, wickedness), or even self-inflicted (careless life or poor choices). Even though, we may have control over some of these sufferings, some we do not have control over, which leaves them in control over us.

In the biblical story of Job we see all kinds of sufferings that beset us in our lives- bereavement, material loss, abandonment, emotional and physical pains. Job in our first reading today described the struggles of helplessness and hopelessness he had in his pains and sufferings. These words of Job are similar to words we utter in the face of sufferings and pains of our lives. Though Job lost everything, and felt the sorrow of it, but he did not lose his faith in God (Job 19: 25). The recognition of God’s presence in our lives in the face of sorrows from our pains and sufferings as Job did, is an act of faith.

The Gospel reminds us of the consoling and healing power of Jesus through which he alleviated the sufferings of his people. In his human nature, Jesus felt the pains and sufferings, but his unflinching trust in God saw him through his sorrows. He invites us to identify our suffering with his, and to see it as the cross of our lives, which we have to carry and follow him (Luke 14:27). Let us reflect and ask ourselves: Do we allow Jesus to be the healer of the sorrows in our lives, family and community? Let us pray for a faith that is active, living and conscious that will lead us through the sorrows of our lives, trusting in God; for nothing indeed is impossible with him (Luke 1: 37). Amen.

“Can anything cut us off from the love of Christ-can hardships or distress, or persecution, or lack of food and clothing, or threats or violence...No; we come through all these things triumphantly victorious by the power of him who loved us” (Romans 8: 35, 37).