

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**O Come, let us worship God  
and bow low before the God who made  
us, for he is the Lord our God.**

## COLLECT

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended always by your protection. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

## FIRST READING

7:1-4.6-7

*A reading from the book of Job*

Job began to speak:

Is not man's life on earth nothing more than pressed service,  
his time no better than hired drudgery?  
Like the slave, sighing for the shade,  
or the workman with no thought but his wages,  
months of delusion I have assigned to me,  
nothing for my own but nights of grief.  
Lying in bed I wonder, 'When will it be day?'  
Risen I think, 'How slowly evening comes!'  
Restlessly I fret till twilight falls.  
Swifter than a weaver's shuttle my days  
have passed,  
and vanished, leaving no hope behind.  
Remember that my life is but a breath,  
and that my eyes will never again see joy.

*The word of the Lord.*

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 146

Response:

**Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted.**

1. Praise the Lord for he is good;  
sing to our God for he is loving;  
to him our praise is due. (R.)
2. The Lord builds up Jerusalem  
and brings back Israel's exiles,  
he heals the broken-hearted,  
he binds up all their wounds.  
He fixes the number of the stars;  
he calls each one by its name. (R.)
3. Our Lord is great and almighty;  
his wisdom can never be measured.  
The Lord raises the lowly;  
he humbles the wicked to the dust. (R.)

## SECOND READING

9:16-19.22-23

*A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians*

I do not boast of preaching the gospel, since it is a duty which has been laid on me; I should be punished if I did not preach it! If I had chosen this work myself, I might have been paid for it, but as I have not, it is a responsibility which has been put into my hands. Do you know what my reward is? It

is this: in my preaching, to be able to offer the Good News free, and not insist on the rights which the gospel gives me. So though I am not a slave of any man I have made myself the slave of everyone so as to win as many as I could. For the weak I made myself weak. I made myself all things to all men in order to save some at any cost; and I still do this, for the sake of the gospel, to have a share in its blessings.

*The word of the Lord.*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

**I am the light of the world, says the Lord,  
anyone who follows me  
will have the light of life.**

Alleluia.

## GOSPEL

1:29-39

*A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.*

On leaving the synagogue, Jesus went with James and John straight to the house of Simon and Andrew. Now Simon's mother-in-law had gone to bed with fever, and they told him about her straightaway. He went to her, took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her and she began to wait on them. That evening, after sunset, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were possessed by devils. The whole town came crowding round the door, and he cured many who were suffering from diseases of one kind or another; he also cast out many devils, but he would not allow them to speak, because they knew who he was. In the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there. Simon and his companions set out in search of him, and when they found him they said, 'Everybody is looking for you'. He answered, 'Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can preach there too, because that is why I came'. And he went all through Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out devils.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O Lord our God,  
who once established these created things  
to sustain us in our frailty,  
grant, we pray,  
that they may become for us now  
the Sacrament of eternal life.  
Through Christ our Lord.

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Let them thank the Lord for his mercy,  
his wonders for the children of men  
for he satisfies the thirsty soul,  
and the hungry he fills with good things.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who have willed that we be partakers  
in the one Bread and the one Chalice,  
grant us, we pray, so to live  
that, made one in Christ,  
we may joyfully bear fruit  
for the salvation of the world.  
Through Christ our Lord.

## GOSPEL REFLECTION



Why do people sometimes think that illness is God's punishment for sin?

What does our attitude have to do with good health? Do you know what holistic medicine is and how it is practised?

Do you generally believe in miracles and expect that they will happen? Why or why not?

What effect can prayer have on illness? Does a miracle or cure always happen after intensive prayer for healing? Why or why not?

Do you find it difficult to accept when God's answer to your prayer is that you or someone you are praying for accept and continue to live with an illness?

*Is ministering to the sick a part of Christian service? What should your attitude be if you are called on to minister to an ill person whose life-style has contributed to their illness?*

Is it difficult for you to minister to another person who is in poor health, hungry, poor, homeless, or imprisoned? Is it appropriate in Christian service to minister to someone's physical needs before addressing the spiritual?

## GOSPEL ACTION

*Visit someone who is ill and offer to read to them, fix a meal, or take them to the doctor. Pray for all those who are ill in your parish. Visit an AIDS hospice if there is one nearby.*

## Readings – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year B

**First Reading:** Leviticus 13:1-2.44-46  
**Second Reading:** 1Corin. 10:31-11:1  
**Gospel:** Mark 1:40-45

## Homily

**7<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B**

Dear friends, last week we saw how the public ministry of Jesus began with a demonstration of genuine authority and power in both word and deed and how Jesus' teaching made a deep impression on the people because unlike the scribes he taught them with authority.

In the Gospel this weekend we hear how Jesus continues his ministry of healing those who were sick and suffering and many people came to him to receive this ministry.

Thank goodness the infection rate is falling and the spread of the coronavirus seems to be being brought under control following these lockdown weeks, the vaccine continues to be rolled out and it looks like we are in line to hit the mid-February target. However, I have been talking to people who have had the virus which we know affects people in different ways. Many in our parish and our local community have suffered and continue to suffer from the virus and very sadly some people have died from it.

In the First Reading we hear how Job is reflecting on his woes and his suffering, he is a good man, 'why me?' he asks; in Job's day suffering was seen as God's punishment on people for their sin. Although Job is a good man, he suffers greatly and his suffering causes him to take a rather gloomy view of life that we hear in today's reading.

This sets the scene for the Gospel and we hear how Jesus does not answer the question 'why suffering?', but we see rather what he does in response to it, we see how he reacts to actual suffering. Firstly, how he cured Simon's mother-in-law who was suffering with a fever; he went to her, took her by the hand and helped her up and the fever left her. Then in the evening time we hear how he cured many other people who were suffering from diseases of one kind or another.

Jesus' response is a very practical one, he didn't cut himself off from those who were sick, rather he put himself among them and gave himself to each one of them, healing them one at a time. Through Jesus God's love, healing, care and compassion is revealed.

Jesus continues to give himself to those who are in need of healing through the sacraments and in other ways. We all have our role to play in helping those who are sick, it could be in practical ways by being a pair of hands to help and care; it could be by offering an ear to listen and comfort; it could be through

## Homily

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daily prayer as we continue to pray for those who are sick and suffering and for an end to this terrible pandemic.

On Thursday of this week, 11<sup>th</sup> February, we celebrate the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes which is also a World Day of Prayer for the Sick. Pope Francis in his message this year says that Thursday is *'an opportunity to devote special attention to the sick and to those who provide for them with assistance and care both within healthcare institutions and within families and communities.'* He goes on to say *'we think of those who have suffered, and continue to suffer, the effects of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic.....we are called to love in particular our frail, infirm and suffering brothers and sisters....we ask Mary, Mother of Mercy and Health of the infirm, to sustain our faith and hope, and help us to care for one another with fraternal love.'*

In fraternal love this week and through the intercession of Mary let us pray especially for all those who are sick, and all the dedicated healthcare professionals who look after and care for them and all the carers who look after loved ones at home. May the Lord of love and healing be with them and bless them all and may Our Lady of Lourdes pray for us.

Sending my love and prayers to you all.

Take care and God bless, **Fr Phil x.**

## **Bidding Prayers and Spiritual Communion**

**7<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B**

In fraternal love we bring all our prayers before God our Father:

For the Church and for Christians everywhere: may they be a sign and an example to the world of Christ's love and compassion for all his children.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are finding life difficult during this time of lockdown: may we support and help them through our love and friendship.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all essential workers particularly the doctors and nurses in our hospitals: may they be granted the health and strength that they need as they continue to care for and support their sisters and brothers.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are sick, especially those suffering from coronavirus; may they know the grace and healing of Jesus the Lord of love and life.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are hungry and the poor in our world; may we be generous in sharing what we have with those who are less fortunate.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For peace in our world and an end to injustice, war, violence and hatred everywhere.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For all the faithful departed especially **Christine McGowan, Christine Warriner, Mike Connor, Kev Bowe, Ellen Moore**, those who have died from Covid-19 and all those who have died recently: **"Eternal rest grant unto them..."**

For those who mourn the loss of loved ones; may Christ's message of hope in eternal life bring them comfort and consolation.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We ask Our Lady and all the Saints to join their prayers with ours as we say:  
**"Hail Mary..."**

God our loving Father,

in faith and trust, we offer these and all our prayers

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

**Amen.**

## **Bidding Prayers and Spiritual Communion**

**7<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year B**

### **Spiritual Communion**

*Prayer of St Alphonsus*

My Jesus,

I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.

I love you above all things and

I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,

come spiritually into my soul

so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever.

Amen.



# The Holy See

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## **MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE XXIX WORLD DAY OF THE SICK 2021**

***“You have but one teacher and you are all brothers” (Mt 23:8). A trust-based relationship to guide care for the sick***

*Dear brothers and sisters,*

The celebration of the XXIX World Day of the Sick on 11 February 2021, the liturgical memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lourdes, is an opportunity to devote special attention to the sick and to those who provide them with assistance and care both in healthcare institutions and within families and communities. We think in particular of those who have suffered, and continue to suffer, the effects of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic. To all, and especially to the poor and the marginalized, I express my spiritual closeness and assure them of the Church’s loving concern.

1. The theme of this Day is drawn from the Gospel passage in which Jesus criticizes the hypocrisy of those who fail to practise what they preach (cf. *Mt 23:1-12*). When our faith is reduced to empty words, unconcerned with the lives and needs of others, the creed we profess proves inconsistent with the life we lead. The danger is real. That is why Jesus uses strong language about the peril of falling into self-idolatry. He tells us: “*You have but one teacher and you are all brothers*” (v. 8).

Jesus’ criticism of those who “preach but do not practise” (v. 3) is helpful always and everywhere, since none of us is immune to the grave evil of hypocrisy, which prevents us from flourishing as children of the one Father, called to live universal fraternity.

Before the needs of our brothers and sisters, Jesus asks us to respond in a way completely contrary to such hypocrisy. He asks us to stop and listen, to establish a direct and personal relationship with others, to feel empathy and compassion, and to let their suffering become our own as we seek to serve them (cf. *Lk 10:30-35*).

2. The experience of sickness makes us realize our own vulnerability and our innate need of others. It makes us feel all the more clearly that we are creatures dependent on God. When we are ill, fear and even bewilderment can grip our minds and hearts; we find ourselves powerless, since our health does not depend on our abilities or life's incessant worries (cf. *Mt 6:27*).

Sickness raises the question of life's meaning, which we bring before God in faith. In seeking a new and deeper direction in our lives, we may not find an immediate answer. Nor are our relatives and friends always able to help us in this demanding quest.

The biblical figure of Job is emblematic in this regard. Job's wife and friends do not accompany him in his misfortune; instead, they blame him and only aggravate his solitude and distress. Job feels forlorn and misunderstood. Yet for all his extreme frailty, he rejects hypocrisy and chooses the path of honesty towards God and others. He cries out to God so insistently that God finally answers him and allows him to glimpse a new horizon. He confirms that Job's suffering is not a punishment or a state of separation from God, much less as sign of God's indifference. Job's heart, wounded and healed, then makes this vibrant and touching confession to the Lord: "I had heard of you by word of mouth, but now my eye has seen you" (42:5).

3. Sickness always has more than one face: it has the face of all the sick, but also those who feel ignored, excluded and prey to social injustices that deny their fundamental rights (cf. *Fratelli Tutti*, 22). The current pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in our healthcare systems and exposed inefficiencies in the care of the sick. Elderly, weak and vulnerable people are not always granted access to care, or in an equitable manner. This is the result of political decisions, resource management and greater or lesser commitment on the part of those holding positions of responsibility. Investing resources in the care and assistance of the sick is a priority linked to the fundamental principle that health is a primary common good. Yet the pandemic has also highlighted the dedication and generosity of healthcare personnel, volunteers, support staff, priests, men and women religious, all of whom have helped, treated, comforted and served so many of the sick and their families with professionalism, self-giving, responsibility and love of neighbour. A silent multitude of men and women, they chose not to look the other way but to share the suffering of patients, whom they saw as neighbours and members of our one human family.

Such closeness is a precious balm that provides support and consolation to the sick in their suffering. As Christians, we experience that closeness as a sign of the love of Jesus Christ, the *Good Samaritan*, who draws near with compassion to every man and woman wounded by sin. United to Christ by the working of the Holy Spirit, we are called to be merciful like the Father and to love in particular our frail, infirm and suffering brothers and sisters (cf. *Jn 13:34-35*). We experience this closeness not only as individuals but also as a community. Indeed, fraternal love in Christ generates a community of healing, a community that leaves no one behind, a community that is inclusive and welcoming, especially to those most in need.

Here I wish to mention the importance of fraternal solidarity, which is expressed concretely in service and can take a variety of forms, all directed at supporting our neighbours. “Serving means caring ... for the vulnerable of our families, our society, our people” (*Homily in Havana*, 20 September 2015). In this outreach, all are “called to set aside their own wishes and desires, their pursuit of power, before the concrete gaze of those who are most vulnerable... Service always looks to their faces, touches their flesh, senses their closeness and even, in some cases, ‘suffers’ that closeness and tries to help them. Service is never ideological, for we do not serve ideas, we serve people” (*ibid.*).

4. If a therapy is to be effective, it must have a relational aspect, for this enables a holistic approach to the patient. Emphasizing this aspect can help doctors, nurses, professionals and volunteers to feel responsible for accompanying patients on a path of healing grounded in a trusting interpersonal relationship (cf. *New Charter for Health Care Workers* [2016], 4). This creates a covenant between those in need of care and those who provide that care, a covenant based on mutual trust and respect, openness and availability. This will help to overcome defensive attitudes, respect the dignity of the sick, safeguard the professionalism of healthcare workers and foster a good relationship with the families of patients.

Such a relationship with the sick can find an unfailing source of motivation and strength in the *charity of Christ*, as shown by the witness of those men and women who down the millennia have grown in holiness through service to the infirm. For the mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection is the source of the love capable of giving full meaning to the experience of patients and caregivers alike. The Gospel frequently makes this clear by showing that Jesus heals not by magic but as the result of *an encounter, an interpersonal relationship*, in which God’s gift finds a response in the faith of those who accept it. As Jesus often repeats: “Your faith has saved you”.

5. Dear brothers and sisters, the commandment of love that Jesus left to his disciples is also kept in our relationship with the sick. A society is all the more human to the degree that it cares effectively for its most frail and suffering members, in a spirit of fraternal love. Let us strive to achieve this goal, so that no one will feel alone, excluded or abandoned.

To Mary, Mother of Mercy and Health of the Infirm, I entrust the sick, healthcare workers and all those who generously assist our suffering brothers and sisters. From the Grotto of Lourdes and her many other shrines throughout the world, may she sustain our faith and hope, and help us care for one another with fraternal love. To each and all, I cordially impart my blessing.

*Rome, Saint John Lateran, 20 December 2020,  
Fourth Sunday of Advent*

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