

He heals the brokenhearted...

He binds up their wounds. Psalm 147:3



Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,

On this **5th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2024** we see in the Gospel the first four disciples called by Jesus: Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John. In Simon Peter's house they witness his first healing miracle. Simon's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. I find it interesting that the first healing involves not a cancer, not a paralysis, but a fever.

In one of his prayers, Blessed John Henry Newman refers to this life as a "fever." He asks God's support until "the fever of life is over..." We go through life agitated about many things and when we look back, we can hardly remember what they were about.

Nowadays we experience various types of fever - gambling, sex, money, alcohol, sports. All can be good in themselves, but they can take over, lay us low. When Jesus saw Simon's mother-in-law laid low by a fever, he took her hand and raised her up. She immediately began to serve - in Greek "diakonia." It's where we get our word, "deacon." Jesus heals because he wants us to serve - to become deacons and deaconesses wherever we find ourselves. You won't have to look far. Right next to us are hungry people and at our doorsteps people with various diseases - including those troubled by demons.

Pope Francis challenges us to reach out to those who are hurting, to people on the margins. In his visit to the Philippines he said that we need to learn to cry with those in need. "Those on the margins cry. Those who have fallen by the wayside cry. Those who are discarded cry. But those who are living a life that is more or less without need, we don't know how to cry." That of course is the first step in healing: to learn to cry, to identify with the person who suffers. I sometimes wonder if - on a human level - Jesus' power to heal comes from his compassion, his ability to enter into the suffering of the other person. When a person is hurting, sometimes even more than a cure, a person wants someone who senses what he is going through.

And Jesus knows we need times of renewal and rest. In today's Gospel he takes Simon and the other disciples "to a deserted place." The first Christian spiritual retreat. To be alone with Jesus is an end in itself. If you have a contemplative vocation, go for it. You have my admiration, but usually the time alone with Jesus leads us to service - to the hungry, to those troubled in mind or body.

For today we see Jesus (and his disciples) embodying the words of the Psalm: "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."

Have a Blessed Week!

Fr. Rafal Ligenza,

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