

Fifth Sunday of the Year B. 4th February 2024. Suffering is not Permanent.

The first reading presented to us the story of a righteous man who tried to keep the commandments of God; he did his best to please God. Job encountered a crisis of faith; he suffered much pain, and there was no help from the one Almighty God he trusted and believed in. His suffering was nonstop distress, morning to night, such that Job said *he would not see happiness again*. Sometimes in life, like Job, we experience difficulties which make us ask questions such as where is God? Have I not been doing my best to serve Him? Did God really know and see everything? If yes, why didn't he come to my rescue? Why did he allow enemies to mock me?

A situation like that calls for a deeper reflection. They are crises of faith that many of us experienced. Some of us are still in the Church, while some have left the Church for the same reason. Beloved in Christ, suffering is bound to happen, but they are not permanent in our lives; they have an expiring date. which is why the psalmist said, weeping shall last for the night, but joys come in the morning. (30:5). Our suffering is but a steppingstone to heaven. We should not quit serving God because we encounter trouble or are sick; in that moment, we should come to God and seek lasting solutions. Remember, God came to us to help us in our journey; though he may not carry crosses that belong to us, he will support us.

We should not allow suffering to discourage us totally. The end of Job was an excellent one because he endured suffering. May Job's experience raise our hope and trust in the saving power of God.

In the gospel reading, Jesus shows us that our suffering is not everlasting but temporal; that is why he came and took away the fever of Simon's mother-in-law, who was sick and later healed many that were brought to him. Beloved, let us not give up but come to Jesus, who has the power to heal and save us from all the worries of this world.

Jesus brought joy and happiness to the house of Peter and many who were brought to him; like him we are called to bring happiness to others, most especially those who lost hope in God: we should reach out to them like St. Paul in our second reading which says, woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. As we journey through this year, let us establish relationships that will not harm or cause others pain.

Peace,

Fr Jignbe Simon