

Theme of the Week - He cured many who suffered

The Gospel on Sunday tells us many things. In the first three verses of the Gospel, we see Jesus fulfil the need of Simon. His mother-in-law is sick and when Jesus arrives at the house, Simon tells him of this. Simon is worried about his mother-in-law and he turns to Jesus because he believes he can help; Jesus does by curing her. St Mark seems to be emphasising the purpose of Jesus' mission — to teach and to heal so that we might be free to serve God. We too need to look to healing people, not by curing them of their sickness like Jesus did but we can be a healing presence for someone going through a difficult time or a personal struggle.

In the next part of the Gospel we see something very similar but on a bigger scale. Many went to Jesus with their sick or who had demons and he cured them. In their hour of need, they turned to Jesus. And if we examine this part of the Gospel, it can resonate with our own lives. When we are in need who do you turn too? Now when the need is small such as needing some equipment or some guidance on what your homework might be, we may turn to a friend. When the needs are greater in having something to eat or buying a new item of clothing we turn to our parents. However, in the Gospel we see the greatest need for some. Their families are sick so they turn to Christ. Unfortunately, many of us in our lifetime may have experienced something similar and when do - with our greatest problems we turn to Christ and usually through prayer.

Let's now look at the second part of the Gospel, we learn more. Jesus the next day is found in prayer. Why is Jesus in prayer? Possibly in thanks to God? Possibly, asking God to help those in need? Jesus, in this moment, illustrates to us the importance of prayer and making time for it so we too can have a relationship with God. St Mark reveals to us a Christ who prays and is close to God, a compassionate Christ who works day and night at the tasks that has been assigned to him. Pope Francis has designated 2024 the year of prayer. Here his Holiness calls us to deepen our relationship with the Lord through prayer. ***"Prayer unites us; it makes us brothers and sisters. It is in prayer that our hearts find the strength not to be cold and insensitive in the face of injustice. In prayer, God keeps calling us, opening our hearts to charity."*** Pope Francis

The last message in the Gospel we find is what Jesus goes on to do after prayer and here we can go to the letter of St Paul in the 2nd reading to seek the importance of this. St Paul writes ***'I do not boast of preaching the gospel, since it is a duty which has been laid on me; ... and I still do this, for the sake of the gospel, to have a share in its blessings'***. St Paul acknowledges the duty on him to spread the Gospel and this is also reflected in Jesus and his ministry. Teaching the Good News was not to be restricted to those who knew him, to save the loved ones of those he knew, it was to be preached so all could hear. Jesus says ***'Let us go elsewhere, to the neighbouring country towns, so that I can preach there too, because that is why I came.'*** Jesus came to serve God and to preach the Good News to all; he has given us the Good News! Rather than wait in our time of need to have a relationship with God, we too should serve one another with the Good News so others can celebrate and rejoice with God. We are reminded that the cure of a person, the setting free from sicknesses of the body and mind, is a freeing to serve others and God in a more complete way. We can emphasise this with one another with the value of daily prayer in our lives. Our lives need to be connected each day to God's love and from being connected, we too can follow in the footsteps of our Saviour and serve God.

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Weekly Reflections
4th February 2024



A reading from the Gospel of St Mark (1:29-39)

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.

Prayer for the Week

Generous Father, you allow us to have a relationship with you through prayer and we thank you for the beautiful things you have given us. Remind us that you sent your son to serve so we too can follow his example. Teach us to give generously and to serve you by helping our brothers and sisters.

Amen.

Feast Day - St Josephine Bakhita 8th February



Josephine Bakhita was kidnapped and sold into slavery. She suffered years of abuse and torture. In 1883, she was sold to a family and two years later they moved to Italy. She became a nanny to a child and accompanied her to school in Venice run by the Canossian Sisters. She felt called to learn more about the Church and was baptized with the name Josephine Margaret. She remained in Italy and dedicated her life to assisting her community and teaching others to love God. She was known for her smile, gentleness and holiness. She even went on record saying, "If I were to meet the slave-traders who kidnapped me and even those who tortured me, I would kneel and kiss their hands".

Josephine was:

Compassionate and loving

Day 1

Why do you think Simon turns to Jesus with his need? What does Simon think will be accomplished?

Why should we then try and help those who are sick and in need?

Day 2

Is your life founded on prayer (do you give prayer the importance it requires?)

Why do you think Pope Francis has given 2024 to the year of prayer?

Day 3

How can you deepen your relationship with God in prayer?

In developing this relationship how too can you try and serve God as our Saviour taught us?