

SYNOPSIS: OT V [B] (Feb 4) HOMILY on Mk 1: 29-39 (L-18) Click on "Reflections for Sunday" in <http://www.vaticannews.va/en/church.html> for the Vatican radio website version of this homily. **Introduction:** Today's readings challenge us to avoid Job's pessimistic and cynical view of life as a chain of pain and sufferings and to accept life with hope and optimism as a precious gift from God, using it to do good for others and spending our time, talents and lives for others as Jesus did and as St. Paul did.

Scripture lessons: While the Gospel presents Jesus enthusiastically living out his Sabbath day of preaching and healing ministry, the first reading details Job's attitude in striking contrast: Job complains of the tedium and futility of life and the miseries of human existence. But eventually Job surrenders himself, his suffering, his work and everything he had had and lost to the greater wisdom of God (Job 42:1-6). In today's Responsorial Psalm (Ps 147), the Psalmist sings praises to God because He is busy full-time in *gathering Israel* from their captivity, in *healing the broken hearted* and *bandaging their wounds*, in controlling the universe, in *sustaining the lowly* and in punishing the wicked. The second reading reveals Paul to us as a true and dynamic follower of Jesus, ready to do something extra for his Lord by preaching the Gospel without recompense or remuneration and obeying the Lord like a slave. Pointing out the spontaneous response of Peter's mother-in-law after she had been healed by Jesus, today's Gospel teaches us that true discipleship means getting involved in giving selfless service to others. During the Sabbath day, Jesus took part in the synagogue worship, taught with authority, exorcised a demon, healed Simon's mother-in-law and, after sundown, "*cured many who were sick with various diseases, and drove out many demons.*" Thus, Jesus spent himself and most of his time ministering to the needs of others, giving healing, forgiveness and a new beginning to many. Yet, Jesus rose early the next morning and went off "to a deserted place" to pray, in order to assess his work before God his Father and to recharge his spiritual batteries.

Life messages: 1) We need to be instruments for Jesus' healing work. Bringing *healing and wholeness* is Jesus' ministry even today. We all need healing of our minds, our memories and our broken relationships. But Jesus now uses counselors, doctors, friends or even strangers in his healing ministry. Let us ask for the ordinary healing we need in our own lives. When we are healed, let us not forget to thank Jesus for his goodness, mercy, and compassion by turning to serve others. Our own healing process is completed only when we are ready to help others in their needs and to focus on things outside ourselves. Let us also be instruments for Jesus' healing by visiting the sick and praying for their healing. But let us remember that we need the Lord's strength not only to make ourselves and others well, but to make us and others whole. 2) We need to live for others as Jesus did: Jesus was a man for others, sharing what he had with others. In his life there was time for prayer, time for healing and time for reconciliation. Let us take up this challenge by sharing love, mercy, compassion and forgiveness with others. Instead of considering life as dull and boring, let us live our lives as Jesus did, full of dynamism and zeal for the glory of God.

OT V [B] (Feb 4) Jb 7:1-4, 6-7; I Cor 9:16-19, 22-23; Mk 1: 29-39

Anecdotes: # 1: “A Million Little Pieces:” The controversial best seller which was later proved to be a “fake-memoir” of the recovering addict hero, James Frey, begins with a challenging anecdote as its preface: The Young Man came to the Old Man seeking counsel. “I broke something, Old Man.” “How badly is it broken?” “Into a million little pieces.” “I’m afraid I can’t help you.” “Why not?” “There is nothing I can do.” “Why can’t it be fixed?” “Because it’s broken beyond repair. It’s in a million little pieces.” Doesn't that sound like what Job says in chapter 7: 1-4, 6-7 in today’s first reading when his life was broken into a million little pieces? But today’s Gospel (Mark 1:29-39), gives us the assurance and proof that nothing in our lives is beyond repair for Jesus, the healing savior.

2: Stop blaming others and start doing good: There is an old and funny little anecdote that goes something like this. An elderly man who was quite ill said to his wife, "You know, Sarah, you’ve always been with me – through the good and the bad. Like the time I lost my job – you were right there by my side. And when the war came, and I enlisted – you became a nurse so that you could be with me. Then I was wounded, and you were there, Sarah, right by my side. Then the Depression hit, and we had nothing – but you were there with me. And now here I am, sick as a dog, and, as always, you’re right beside me. You know something, Sarah -- you’re a jinx! You always bring me bad luck!" There is a part of us that is tempted to look for somebody to blame for all the things that go wrong in our lives. More often than not, we blame the very people we once looked up to for an answer. Today’s first reading from the book of Job is a futile attempt to answer the perennial question, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” The Gospel shows us how Jesus spent himself in alleviating the pain and suffering around Galilee by his preaching and healing ministry rather than by pondering on universal solutions for the problem of worldwide evil.

3 Experience the healing touch of God. Most of us are familiar with Lourdes, the Catholic shrine in southern France built at the place where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to a saintly young woman named Bernadette a century and a half ago. Pilgrims today continue to throng to the shrine, hoping to be cured of their ailments. Over the decades, thousands have left behind their crutches and braces as silent witnesses to the Lord’s power to make them well. This sort of thing is, of course, nothing new. Sites of holy apparitions and miraculous healings ranging from Lourdes (France), Fatima (Portugal), Guadalupe (Mexico) and Medjugorje (Yugoslavia), to the holy sites in our own land, have drawn pilgrims from all countries throughout the ages. These seekers have made their way to sacred temples, grottoes, and hillsides in the hope of finding healing and strength. Some dismiss such journeys of Faith as childish piety, inappropriate in an age of

therapeutic advances such as our own. But healing is an essential element of the Gospel message. Surely, Jesus, whose Sabbath day of preaching and healing ministry is described in today's Gospel, will not disappoint us today when we are assembled around the altar seeking his power, healing and favor in our own lives.

Introduction: The readings today challenge us to go courageously beyond people's expectations by doing good as Jesus did, instead of brooding over all the pain and suffering in the world that we cannot end. They invite us to explore the importance of work in our lives and to learn a lesson in work ethics from Job, Paul and Jesus. While the Gospel presents Jesus enthusiastically living out his Sabbath day of missionary work, the first reading details Job's attitude in striking contrast: in the midst of his long suffering, Job speaks of the tedium and futility of life. Job's words describe the miseries of human existence. Eventually, Job arrived at a place in his life where, in trust and in Faith, he surrendered himself, his suffering, his work and everything he had had and lost to the greater wisdom of God (Job 42:1-6). The second reading, on the other hand, reveals Paul as a true and dynamic follower of Jesus, ready to do something extra for his Lord. Paul's conviction about the Good News and his commitment to Christ were so intense that preaching the Gospel had become a compulsion for him. Knowing that he had been called to do more than just "preach" the Gospel, he resolved to preach it without recompense. Pointing out the spontaneous response of Peter's mother-in-law after she had been healed by Jesus - "*...the fever left her and she waited on them*" (Mark 1:31)"-- today's Gospel teaches us that true discipleship means getting involved in giving selfless service to others. Jesus' first day of public ministry at Capernaum was a Sabbath day. During the day, he had taken part in the synagogue worship, taught with authority, exorcised a demon and healed Simon's mother-in-law. After all that, when the sun had set, he "*cured many who were sick with various diseases, and drove out many demons.*" Thus, Jesus spent himself and most of his time ministering to the needs of others, bringing healing, forgiveness and a new beginning to many. Yet, he was well aware that even the most important work had to be continually refueled and evaluated before God his Father. Hence, Jesus rose early the next morning and went off "to a deserted place" to pray in order to assess his work for his Father's glory and to recharge his spiritual batteries.

First Reading, Job 7:1-4, 6-7: The book of Job is a long didactic poem intended to refute the ancient Jewish belief that God rewards the good and punishes the wicked in this life. The book describes God's permitting Satan to test the commitment of His servant Job. A prosperous and God-fearing man, Job suddenly experienced the successive, catastrophic losses of wealth, family and health. The only explanation the author offers for God's permitting the innocent Job to suffer these losses is that He had allowed Satan to test Job's trusting commitment and fidelity to God, even under extreme pressure. Only in the light

of Christ's sufferings and cruel execution, can we see the value of suffering in this life. Job's detailed account of the miseries of human existence contrasts with Jesus' work of healing as described in the Gospel. In Job's account, he claims that the entire human condition is sad and hopeless, and he compares himself to a farm laborer who is forced to do degrading work for wages that barely keep him alive and who yearns for relief from the scorching sun. There is no peace, Job says, even in sleep! Instead, there is only a restless expectation of a return to toil at dawn. But continued suffering, monotony and isolation make Job aware of the emptiness of life without God and the hope of ultimate union with God. We learn from this reading that God listens to every human cry, even to the anger and dismay of the lament. We also learn that there is no struggle so great, no suffering so intense that it cannot be surrendered with confidence into God's capable, powerful hands.

Of course, Job is right. Left to our own resources, we cannot escape the ultimate meaninglessness of life. Fleeting joys are obliterated by suffering and inevitable death. We are reassured by Faith, however that God gives life a purpose. He permits pain in order to serve His saving will and to teach us appreciate His gift of Life to the full. The Good News we proclaim is that, through the death and Resurrection of Jesus, God has joined us to Himself, now and forever. Job eventually realizes that those who choose to give themselves to God will find that life has meaning. Modern psychology teaches us that it is only our totally free actions that bring us real fulfillment in life. If our life is filled with drudgery and our days are without hope, it may be because we have never dared go beyond the security of other people's approval and acceptance. Jesus shows us that we can reach perfection only by allowing the risk of suffering into our lives, and submitting ourselves to God' Wisdom and His loving Will in all things.

Second Reading, 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23: Corinth was a center of philosophical and religious ferment, filled with new and bizarre ideas. There were many in Corinth who considered Christianity to be merely one of many cults, this one initiated by a Jewish teacher named Jesus of Nazareth. They also knew that Paul was a former persecutor of Christians. So, in Chapter Nine of this letter Paul explained his authorization to preach the Good News of Jesus to the Corinthians. He exercised his authority modestly, making himself "*a slave to all*" and affirming that he had "*no reason to boast.*" His preaching ministry went beyond what Jesus demanded. First, Paul made no use of his Gospel-given right to accept support from the community. He gave up rights and privileges, which he had the right to claim, in order to give himself fully to the spreading of the Gospel. He was determined to be seen as free from any desire for personal praise or gain. Paul emphasized that giving up his legitimate rights for the sake of a higher ideal gave him true freedom. He could remain respectful of others but never patronizing. Like Jeremiah, Paul saw his preaching not merely as a job but as a divine commission, a vocation. He also knew that he by accepting

poverty for the Gospel's sake, he also had a share in the blessing of the Gospel. Paul thus encouraged his Corinthian converts to be ready always to forgo their own rights when the spiritual welfare of a neighbor was at stake. Paul's freedom to serve was rooted in the free choices he had made as a preacher of the Gospel. The purpose of his ministry was not to gain personal profit, but to draw people closer to God.

Exegesis: Unrestricted preaching and healing ministry of Jesus: Capernaum was a small port town located on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, mostly serving fisherman and the fishing industry. The Sea of Galilee (or the Lake of Tiberius, or the Lake of Gennesaret), is a freshwater lake, 13 miles long at its longest, and 8 miles wide at its widest, with a maximum depth of a hundred and fifty feet. It is surrounded by small mountains. In the section of Mark's Gospel, we read for today, we find the description of a typical Sabbath day in the ministry of Jesus. Having attended the synagogue service, Jesus exorcised a demon and eased the fever of Simon's mother-in-law. After sundown of that same day, he "*cured many who were sick with various diseases, and drove out many demons.*" Whether the people whom Jesus healed were really possessed by the devil or not, they were mentally disturbed, and they were fully healed. Jesus worked miracles as signs that God's healing love was at work in the world. His disciples were excited at seeing their master becoming a local hero and attracting huge crowds, like John the Baptist. They felt that this would increase their reputation and prosperity. So, when they found Jesus the next day, very early in the morning, at prayer in a deserted place, they suggested that he return to the place where he had been so successful. Jesus' answer, "*Let us move on to the neighboring villages, so that I may proclaim the Good News there also,*" shows that his mission had an entirely different objective from the one his disciples expected.

Jesus gave importance to preaching and teaching: Jesus had no interest in being the center of attraction, of being popular, or of being "*successful.*" He simply wanted to be where he could tend to the needs of the people to whom he had come in order to bring spiritual salvation and blessing to them and to all people. That is why, for the remaining two years of his life, Jesus went from town to town preaching the Kingdom of God. Traveling to neighboring villages and throughout the whole of Galilee (and beyond), Jesus remained continually on the move so that everyone could benefit from his saving words and works. He used his energies to bring healing and wholeness into the lives of the people. Jesus' purpose was to teach, to serve, to give, and to share. Since nobody can be saved who has not first believed (Mark 16:16), it is the first task of priests, as co-workers of the bishops, to preach the Gospel of God to all men (2 Corinthians 11:7). In the Church of God, all of us should listen devoutly to the preaching of the Gospel, and we all should feel a responsibility to spread the Gospel by our words and actions. It is the responsibility of the hierarchy of the Church to teach the Gospel

authentically--on the authority of Christ. By leaving the relative safety and security of Capernaum and going to other towns and villages, Jesus risked opposition and even death. It is precisely by going beyond what people expected of him that Jesus accomplished his saving mission. If, as Christ's disciples, we are tempted to use only a part of our gifts, we may hesitate to take risks for Christ, lest this create problems for us. Jesus shows us that we reach perfection only by allowing the element of risk into our lives.

Jesus recharged his spiritual batteries every day: Jesus was convinced that if he were going to spend himself for others by his preaching and healing ministry, he would repeatedly have to summon spiritual reinforcements. He knew that he could not live without prayer, because his teaching and healing ministry drained him of power. For example, after describing how the woman who had touched Jesus' garment was instantly healed, Mark remarks: "Jesus knew that power had gone out of him" (5:30). The "deserted place" to which Jesus went to pray was not actually a desert. Rather, it was a place where he he could be free from distractions -- a place where he could give himself unreservedly to prayer. He went there, not so much to escape the pressures of life, as to refresh himself for further service. Jesus' prayer is a prayer of perfect praise and thanksgiving to the Father; it is a prayer of petition for himself and for us; and it also a model for the prayer of His disciples. Our daily activities also drain us of our spiritual power and vitality. Our mission of bearing witness to God requires spiritual energy which comes to us through daily anointing by the Holy Spirit. Hence, we, too, need to be recharged spiritually and rejuvenated every day by prayer - listening to God and talking to Him.

Life messages: 1) We need to be instruments for the exercise of Jesus' healing power. Bringing *healing and wholeness* is Jesus' ministry even today, He continues it through the Church and through the Christians. In the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, the Church prays for spiritual and physical healing, forgiveness of sins, and comfort for those who are suffering from illness. We all need the healing of our minds, our memories and our broken relationships. Jesus now uses counselors, doctors, friends or even strangers in his healing ministry. Let us look at today's Gospel and identify with the mother-in-law of Peter. Let us ask for the ordinary healing we need in our own lives. When we are healed, let us not forget to thank Jesus for his goodness, mercy, and compassion toward us by our own turning to serve others. Our own healing process is completed only when we are ready to help others in their needs and to focus on things outside ourselves. The Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes 7:39 instructs us: "*Be not slow to visit the sick; because by these things you shall be confirmed in love.*" Let us also be instruments for the exercise of Jesus' healing power by visiting the sick and praying for their healing. But let us remember that

we need the Lord's strength, not only to make ourselves and others well, but to make ourselves and others whole.

2) We need to live for others as Jesus did: Jesus was a man for others, sharing what he had with others. In his life there was time for prayer, time for healing and time for reconciliation. Let us take up this challenge by sharing love, mercy, compassion and forgiveness with others. Instead of considering life as dull and boring let us live our lives as Jesus did, full of dynamism and zeal for the glory of God.

JOKE OF THE WEEK: 1) Humor in our healing ministry: "Laugh and the world laughs with you." "Laughter is music of the spheres, language of the gods." And it's fine medicine. Laughter exercises the face, shoulders, diaphragm, and abdomen. The breathing deepens, the heart rate rises, and the blood is more oxygenated. Endorphins are released, pain thresholds are raised, and some studies suggest that even immune systems are boosted. Norman Cousins, in *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient*, tried laughter therapy, and found that ten minutes of hearty laughter could give him two hours of pain-free sleep. When you laugh, others laugh too. Laughter is a contagious, highly effective, totally organic medicine. It has no side effects, and no one is allergic to it. Did you have your dose of laughter today? Jesus may have burst into hearty laughter when he watched Zacchaeus climb down from the sycamore tree. Perhaps he also had at least a mischievous smile when Peter started sinking in his attempt to walk on water. Then why don't we too have a hearty laugh in the worshipping community in the real presence of our Lord?

2) Humor in the preaching ministry: After the Sunday Mass a little boy told the pastor, "When I grow up, I'm going to give you some money." "Well, thank you," the pastor replied, "but why?" "Because my daddy says you're one of the poorest preachers we've ever had."

3) Humor at Sunday collection: During the last Sunday service that the visiting pastor was to spend at the church he had served for some months, his hat was passed around for goodwill, farewell offering. When it returned to the pastor, it was empty. The pastor didn't flinch. He raised the hat to Heaven. "I thank you, Lord, that I got my hat back from this congregation."

4) Humor at the liturgy: A very innovative liturgy director, a young lady, danced the offertory procession in 'attractive' costumes and playing the banjo. The bishop was presiding on this occasion of the pastor's golden jubilee Mass. As the "dancer" approached the altar the bishop whispered to the pastor: "If she asked for your head on a platter, she'd have it!"

USEFUL WEBSITES OF THE WEEK:

- 1) The Catholic Internet Directory-- <http://www.catholic-church.org/cid/>
- 2) Movie and family video reviews: <http://www.usccb.org/movies/index.htm>
- 3) Catholic questions& answers: OnceCatholic.org
- 4) Catholic answers for teenagers: EveryStudent.com
- 5) Catholic apologetics: <http://fisheaters.com/responses.html>

6) California "Right to Die Bill:" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oT12lxS-qMw&x-yt-cl=84359240&x-yt-ts=1421782837&feature=player_embedded

"Scriptural Homilies" no. 116 by Fr. Tony (akadavil@gmail.com) L/18



18 Additional anecdotes: 1) **"It must be Peter's mother in law!":** There is the funny story about a woman listening to her pastor preach a Sunday morning sermon about Simon Peter's wife's mother, ill with a fever. Since it was a boring sermon the woman left the Church after the Mass, feeling somewhat unfulfilled. Consequently, she decided to go to Church again that day, out in the country where she had grown up. When she arrived, she discovered to her dismay that her pastor had been invited to be the substitute priest and again during the Mass he preached on the Gospel of the day about Peter's mother-in-law being ill with a fever. Believing that there was still time to redeem the day, the woman decided to go to the hospital chapel in the evening. As you may have guessed, her pastor was assigned to say the evening Mass there, and he preached the same sermon on Peter's wife's mother and her fever. Next morning, the woman was on a bus riding downtown and, wonder of wonders, her pastor boarded that bus and sat down beside her. An ambulance raced by with sirens roaring. In order to make conversation, the pastor said, "Well, I wonder who it is?" "It must certainly be Peter's mother-in-law," she replied. "She was sick all day yesterday." (*Millennium Edition of Preaching*)

2) **"I can't handle it any more!":** There is a story about a couple who had been married for more than thirty years. One evening, when the husband returned from work, he found his wife packing. "What in the world are you doing?" he asked. "I can't handle it any more," she replied. "I'm tired of all the bickering

and arguing and complaining that's been going on between us all these years, I'm leaving." Whereupon, the startled husband suddenly dashed to the bedroom, pulled a suitcase out of the closet, filled it with his belongings and ran after his wife, saying, "I can't handle it any more either. I'm going with you!" Today's first reading tells the story of a man named Job who is at a point in his life where he can't handle it anymore. He expresses himself as a man without hope. In Chapter Seven he complains that life is a "drudgery" ... that his eyes "will never see joy again" ... he can but "lament the bitterness of his soul" (Jb. 7:1, 7, 11). (Millennium edition of *Preaching*).

3) **"You're so kind."** A few years ago in Sweden, a nurse working in a government hospital was assigned to an elderly woman patient. This patient was a tough case. She had not spoken a word in three years. The other nurses disliked her and tried to avoid her as much as they could. Basically, they ignored her. But the new nurse decided to try "unconditional love." The elderly woman patient rocked all day in a rocking chair. So one day the nurse pulled up a rocking chair beside the lady and just rocked along with her and loved her. Occasionally, the nurse would reach over and gently touch and pat the hand of the elderly woman. After just a few days of this, the patient suddenly opened her eyes and turned and said to the nurse, "You're so kind." The next day she talked some more and incredibly two weeks later, the lady was well enough to leave the hospital and go home! Of course, it doesn't always work like that, but studies are accumulating which show without question that love has healing power. Today's Gospel describes how Jesus demonstrated the love and mercy of God his Father for His children by his teaching and healing ministry.

4) **Healing love of Jesus:** Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806 - 1861) was one of the most prominent poets of the Victorian era. Her poetry was widely popular in both England and the United States during her lifetime. Her 1844 volume *Poems* made her one of the most popular writers in the country at the time and inspired Robert Browning to write to her, telling her how much he loved her work. Elizabeth had become an invalid and had suffered for many years, unable even to lift her head from her pillow. But then one day she was visited by Robert Browning. It was love at first sight. In just one visit, he brought her so much joy and happiness that she lifted her head. On his second visit, she sat up in bed. On the third visit, they started dating and soon got married! Love can heal us physically. No wonder, as today's Gospel tells us, people were healed by coming into physical contact with Jesus. He was Love Incarnate... and that's what he is calling us to be today: Love made flesh; Love personified; Love lived out. This is the first point. Love can heal our bodies. Love can heal physically.

5) **Crumbled and dirty \$20 bill:** A well-known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a crisp new \$20 bill. There were 200 people in the room. The speaker asked them, "How many of you would like to have this \$20 bill?" Hands went up

all over the room. Then the speaker said, "I'm going to give this \$20 bill to one of you, but first let me do this." He proceeded to crumple the \$20 bill up... and then he held it up and said, "Who wants it now?" Hand went up everywhere. "Well," he replied, "What if I do this?" He dropped it on the ground and stepped on it and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up and held it up for all to see. It was crumpled and smudged and dirty, and he said, "Who wants it now?" Still hands went up all over the place. Then the speaker said, "My **friends**, you have just learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. No matter how smudged and rumped it became, it was still worth \$20." Many times in our lives, we get knocked around... dropped, crumpled, smudged, and ground into the dirt... by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. And sometimes we feel as though we are worthless and used up and of no account. But no matter what has happened... or what will happen, you will never lose your value in God's eyes. Do you feel spiritually sick this morning? Do you have a fevered soul right now? The doctor is in the house! Jesus Christ is the Great Physician... and just as His love healed Simon's mother-in-law, even so, His love can heal you, help you, cure you, redeem you, save you. In gratitude, you will want to serve, to help others. You will want to pass that love on to everybody you meet.

6) Happiness begins with a touch -- "a touch of the Master's hand. W. E. Sangster was once asked if he would find time to cheer up a young man who was recuperating from a nervous breakdown. Sangster promised to do his best. He sought the young man out and began to try to help him, but it was hard work. "This is a gray world," the young man said. "I see no purpose in it. It is dull, meaningless and evil. Its pleasures soon pass. Its pains endure. I seriously ask myself the question: 'Is life worth living?'" Sangster saw him once or twice a week for nearly two months. Every conversation was the same "nothing seemed to improve. Then something happened to that young man. He fell in love. Head over heels in love! On the day his engagement was announced he came to see Sangster and began the conversation with words something like this: "This is a lovely world. Come out into the garden and listen to that little bird singing fit to burst its heart. Isn't it a glorious morning? How good it is to be alive!" That young man did not will himself to that change of attitude. It was not a choice he made. Something happened to him within. He fell in love. So it is when we experience Christ's presence in our lives. The world seems to change. But it isn't the world at all. We are changed by a touch - the Master's touch which healed people as described in today's Gospel.

7) "What would you like for Christmas?" Today's Gospel tells us that Jesus put his priorities in order by starting every day in prayer. Gorman Williams spent most of his life as a missionary to India. In 1945, he purchased tickets for a long-awaited vacation back in the United States. But a few days before he was to

leave, he heard about some Jews who had escaped the wrath of the Nazis. They had traveled by boat to India seeking refuge. Since it was a time of global war, the Indian government denied their request to immigrate. They were granted permission to stay for a short time in the lofts of the buildings near the dock. Their living conditions were wretched. But it was better than being sent to a concentration camp in Germany. It was Christmas Eve when Gorman Williams heard about the plight of these Jews. Immediately he went to the dock, entered the first building and called out, "Merry Christmas! What would you like for Christmas?" The response was slow. "We're Jewish," someone called out. "I know," Williams said, "but what would you like for Christmas?" The weary Jews, fearful for their very lives, replied, "We would like some German pastries." At that point Gorman Williams sold his ticket to the United States and purchased more German pastries than anyone had ever seen. He brought lots and lots of them and carried them in large baskets. Later he told this story to a group of students. One brash, judgmental young man reprimanded him. "You shouldn't have done that," he said, "they were not even Christians." "No they weren't," the wise missionary quietly replied, "but I am." Gorman Williams had his priorities in order. [Nell W. Mohney, *Don't Put a Period Where God Puts A Comma*, (Nashville: Dimensions for Living, 1993), pp. 21-22.]

8) **Miraculous healing:** One of my all-time favorite Church magazine cartoons pictures a physician in his office, speaking with his bookkeeper. The subject of their conversation is a patient's bill, which apparently had been in the accounts receivable file for a long, long time. The bookkeeper says to the doctor, "He says that since you told him his recovery was a miracle, he sent his check to the Church." Today's Gospel passage from Mark touches on the subject of miraculous healing.

9) **Don't forget your primary objective:** Charles R. Swindoll, in his book *Dropping Your Guard*, tells of Flight 401 bound for Miami from New York City with a load of holiday passengers. As the huge aircraft approached the Miami Airport for its landing, a light that indicates proper deployment of the landing gear failed to come on. The plane flew in a large, looping circle over the swamps of the Everglades while the cockpit crew checked out the light failure. Their question was this, had the landing gear actually not deployed or was it just the light bulb that was defective? To begin with, the flight engineer fiddled with the bulb. He tried to remove it, but it wouldn't budge. Another member of the crew tried to help out...and then another. By and by, if you can believe it, all eyes were on the little light bulb that refused to be dislodged from its socket. No one noticed that the plane was losing altitude. Finally, it dropped right into a swamp. Many were killed in that plane crash. While an experienced crew of highly-paid and seasoned pilots messed around with a seventy-five-cent light bulb, an entire airplane and many of its passengers were lost. The crew momentarily forgot the most basic of all rules of the air -- "Don't forget to fly the airplane!"

The same thing can happen to the local Church. The Church can have so many activities, programs, projects, committee meetings, banquets, and community involvements -- so many wheels spinning without really accomplishing anything of eternal significance -- that the congregation forgets its primary objective. So what is Jesus' goal? Jesus says it is to preach. "That is why I have come, to preach! There may be some healings along the way. Simon, I have come to preach the kingdom of God and we must go elsewhere."

10) "Every one is searching for you." I read recently about a woman named Laura. Laura first attended Mass at age five. Her mom had recently become a Catholic. When Laura inquired about the Church, her mom said, "This is where Jesus lives." At the end of the service, Laura said, "I want to see Jesus." Her mom tried to explain that Jesus was there in spirit not body, but the five-year-old didn't get it. Finally, her mom said, "That's enough, Laura, let's go home." Laura resisted. Mom insisted. Then Laura bolted across the aisle and bear-hugged a marble post. She yelled out, for all to hear, "I'm not leaving till I see Jesus!" Her mother was humiliated. The more she asserted, the louder Laura protested. Finally the priest came over, bent down, took Laura by the hand, and gently led her to the tabernacle and told her that Jesus is inside. After a couple of minutes Laura returned happily to her mom, content to go home. That was twenty years ago. Today people who know her call Laura by her proper name, Sister Laura. She became a nun! In that role she has excelled in school and thrived as a servant to others. I guess we'd have to concede that somehow in the Sacrament that day long ago, little Laura "saw Jesus." [Jim Cathcart, *The Acorn Principle* (NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998), pp. 153-154].] I personally believe that everyone is looking for Jesus in his or her own way. We have what French mathematician, physicist, and philosopher Blaise Pascal called a "God-shaped void" within our souls. We try to fill it with all kinds of inappropriate and ineffective substitutes - power, wealth, sex, drugs - but nothing on this earth can suffice. As St. Augustine said so beautifully, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." All people, everywhere, need what only Christ can offer them.

11) Look at life through the eyes of Jesus. Pastor Edward Markquart of Seattle tells about hearing a former NFL football coach, Sam Ratigliano, speak one time at a banquet. Pastor Markquart assumed he was going to hear one of those "jocks for Jesus," banquet speeches in which he would be told how Jesus had helped this NFL coach win so many victories. Instead, Sam Ratigliano told how he and his wife were driving one evening with their two-year-old daughter in the back seat. Suddenly a car was upon them; there was an accident; their car rolled over; the child was thrown out; and was pinned underneath the car. Markquart with his cynical attitude expected the NFL coach to say something like, "I found enormous strength in myself, picked up the back bumper of the car one inch, just

enough for my wife to get her safely out." Ratigliano then went on to tell how he and his wife grieved so deeply for so long over the death of their little girl. It was an awful time for them, the most difficult time in their marriage. Time went on, and they got pregnant again, finally, an answer to prayer, and that baby was about to be delivered . . . and it was stillborn. So here they were at this banquet, says Ed Markquart, and Sam Ratigliano went on to say: "God has called me to be his servant in my turf, the National Football League. He rules over all aspects of my life, when winning or losing, in triumphs and tragedies. How about you? Where is your turf? Does God rule you there in your turf, in your situation? Not just when you're winning, but when you are losing? Not just during the triumphs but during the tragedies of your life? Does God rule you then?" (http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_b_christ_the_king.htm.) Here was a professional football coach who had learned to look at life through the eyes of Jesus.

12) **The best organized, but the least efficient:** A German soldier was wounded. He was given leave for two weeks and ordered to go to the military hospital in his hometown for treatment. When he arrived at the large and imposing building, he saw two doors, one marked, "For the slightly wounded," and the other, "For the seriously wounded." He entered through the first door and found himself going down a long hall. At the end of it were two more doors, one marked, "For wounded officers" and the other, "For wounded enlisted men." He entered through the latter and found himself going down another long hall. At the end of it were two more doors, one marked, "For party members" and the other, "For non-party members." He took the second door, and when he opened it he found himself out on the street. When the soldier returned home after getting his wounds bandaged in a private hospital, his mother asked him, "How did you get along at the hospital?" "Well, mom," he replied, "to tell the truth, the people there didn't do anything for me -- but you ought to see the tremendous organization they have!" The soldier's comment describes many Churches in our day: well-organized, but accomplishing little. Today's Gospel tells us how Jesus and his disciples were not "organized," but were able to accomplish great things.

13) **Saving the broken pieces:** At the Royal Palace of Tehran in Iran, you can see one of the most beautiful mosaic works in the world. The ceilings and walls flash like diamonds with multifaceted reflections. Originally, when the palace was designed, the architect specified huge sheets of mirrors on the walls. When the first shipment arrived from Paris, they found to their horror that the mirrors were shattered. The contractor threw them in the trash and brought the sad news to the architect. Amazingly, the architect ordered all of the broken pieces collected, then smashed them into tiny pieces and glued them to the walls to become a mosaic of silvery, shimmering, mirrored bits of glass. Broken to become beautiful! It's possible to turn your scars into stars. It's possible to be better because of the brokenness. Never underestimate

God's power to repair and restore. Today's Gospel describes how Jesus brought healing to so many broken-hearted people. (*Robert Schuller; quoted by Fr. Botelho*).

14) **Make lives beautiful:** At the end of the Second World War, Rabbi Rubenstein, confronted with the realization that 6,000,000 of his fellow Jews had been exterminated as useless parasites by Hitler, came to the conclusion that there is no God. But to blame God for all the ills in the world is not the answer. The first place to look is within every human being; one's inhumanity to another. Wars are started by human beings, food shortages are deliberately caused to keep the world prices up, and millions are abused, exploited and manipulated by their own fellow human beings. We can make life ugly or beautiful! Today's Gospel describes how Jesus made lives of so many in Galilee meaningful and beautiful by his preaching and healing ministry. (*Vima Dasan in His Word Lives; quoted by Fr. Botelho*).

) **The healing in giving:** He stood on a bridge-fifty feet above the swirling river. He lit his last cigarette -before making his escape. There was no other way out. He had tried everything: orgies of sensuality, travel excitement, drink and drugs. And now the last failure: marriage. No woman could stand him after a few months. He demanded too much and gave nothing. He was too much a brute to be treated like a man. The river was the best place for him. A shabby man passed by, saw him standing in the shadow and said, "Got a dime for a cup of coffee, Mister?" The other smiled in the darkness. A dime! What difference would a dime make now? "Sure, I've got a dime, buddy. I've got more than a dime." He took out a wallet. "Here take it all." There was about \$100 in the wallet, he took it out and thrust it towards the tramp. "What's the idea?" asked the tramp. "It's all right. I won't need it where I am going." He glanced down towards the river. The tramp took the bills, and stood holding them uncertainly for a moment. Then he said, "No, you don't mister. I may be a beggar, but I'm no coward; and I won't take money from one either. Take your filthy money with you -into the river. He threw the bills over the rails and they fluttered and scattered as they drifted slowly down towards the dark river. "So long, coward." said the tramp and he walked off. The 'coward' gasped. Suddenly, he wanted the tramp to have the money he had thrown away. He wanted to give - and couldn't! To give! That was it! He never had tried that before. To give -and be happy... He took one last look at the river and turned from it and followed the tramp....Today's Gospel describes how Jesus gave himself to the people of Galilee. (*Christopher Notes; quoted by Fr. Botelho*).

16) **The Black Death**, the most severe epidemic in human history, ravaged Europe from 1347-1351. It is thought that as many as 25 million people (one-third of Europe's population at the time) were killed during this short period.

Thousands of people died each week. This plague killed entire families at a time and destroyed at least 1,000 villages. Once a family member had contracted the disease, the entire household was doomed to die. Parents abandoned their children, and parent-less children roamed the streets in search for food. Boccaccio said it best "... brother was forsaken by brother, nephew by uncle, brother by sister and often husband by wife, and fathers and mothers were found to abandon their own children..." If the people weren't dead they ran away in vain attempts to save themselves. Victims, delirious with pain, often lost their sanity. Life was in total chaos. The Black Death struck the European people with very little warning. Physicians and philosophers harmed rather than helped. They did not understand the causes of infectious diseases, or how they spread. It is no wonder that the people looked to priests and story-tellers for answers, rather than doctors. They did not know where this sudden cruel death had come from. And they did not know whether it would ever go away. The Plague was a disaster without a parallel. Why man has to suffer, get sick, and die are the problems that continue to nag people today just as they did humanity from the beginning. The first reading tells the story of Job's vain search for an answer, and the Gospel explains how healing was one of Jesus' main ministries. (Fr. Bobby Jose).

17) **Healing touch:** Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861) was one of the most prominent poets of the Victorian era. Her poetry was widely popular in both England and the United States during her lifetime. Her 1844 volume, *Poems*, made her one of the most popular writers in the country at the time and inspired Robert Browning to write to her, telling her how much he loved her work. Elizabeth had become an invalid and had suffered for many years, unable even to lift her head from her pillow. But then one day she was visited by Robert Browning. It was love at first sight. In just one visit, he brought her so much joy and happiness that she lifted her head. On his second visit, she sat up in bed. On the third visit, they started dating and soon got married! Love can heal us physically. No wonder, as today's Gospel tells us, people were healed by coming into physical contact with Jesus. (Fr. Bobby Jose).

18) **"You must find the artichokes in your life."** The musician Andre Kostelanetz once visited the French artist Henri Matisse. When Kostelanetz got to Matisse's home, his nerves were frayed and he was exhausted. Matisse noticed this and said to him good-humouredly, "My friend you must find the artichokes in your life." With that he took Kostelanetz outside to his garden. When they came to a patch of artichokes, Matisse stopped. He told Kostelanetz that every morning after he has worked for a while, he comes out to his patch of artichokes to pause and be still. He just stands there looking at the artichokes. Matisse then added: "Though I have painted over 200 canvasses, I always find new combination of colors and fantastic patterns. No one is allowed to disturb me in this ritual. It gives me fresh inspiration,

relaxation, and a new perspective towards my work.” (Mark Link in Sunday Homilies; *quoted by Fr. Botelho*). **L/18**

“Scriptural Homilies” **Cycle B (No 14)** by Fr. Tony (akadavil@gmail.com)

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YouTube lessons for kids, the youth & the adults

Copy the video-links given below to [Google Search](#) or [YouTube Search](#) to watch the videos

1) The seven sacraments: “101 sacraments” – Busted Halos series

(<http://bustedhalo.com/>) great presentation

7 videos: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL60396574E0A0B9A2>

Sacraments in general (Downloaded and kept in another USB)

1) USCCB: Sacraments: <https://youtu.be/0Dp-xLQpxC0>

2) Videos: Dynamic Catholic: Sacraments: <https://youtu.be/-xU77dXiszk>

3) Karlo Broussard: Catholic & Biblical part I: <https://youtu.be/IUgmmjFtDtA>

4) Karlo Broussard: Catholic & Biblical part II: <https://youtu.be/SaQ74wh2lCU>

1) Baptism 1) (Fr. Dave Dwyer C.S.P.) <https://youtu.be/05YB2jdHLSY> **2) Bishop**

Barron: <https://youtu.be/fV8uu9-sYSk> **3) Fr. Thomas Scirghi:**

<https://youtu.be/tibmY4R3Tjw>

2) Confirmation 1. (Fr. Dave Dwyer C.S.P.): <https://youtu.be/Qt32SyDWuW8>

2. Bishop Barron: <https://youtu.be/f-UuMAU7qT0> **3) Theology:**

<https://youtu.be/avIcgVpMbSE> **4) Bishop Don Hying, Milwaukee:**

<https://youtu.be/Wro4cjCR89U>; **5) The ceremony: Archdiocese of Brisbane:**

<https://youtu.be/sFo-9H-lZlk>; **6) History(diagrammatic):** <https://youtu.be/KavMd4fKQkk>

&<https://youtu.be/SxDV9voZW64> **7) Bishop of Honolulu:** <https://youtu.be/BzCKs7IdMKw>

3) Anointing of the sick: <https://youtu.be/hEppjWNO2y4>

4) Sacrament of penance: 6 videos

1 & 2 & 3 Fr. Dave Dyer: <https://youtu.be/Wz5-vu6A58E>

<https://youtu.be/RjVck3euhWY>

<https://youtu.be/oJg29UG6028>

3) https://youtu.be/f9ky_wzeo4o

4) <https://youtu.be/GCmumpsrwBE>

4) Fr. Barron on confession (Why confess to a priest?)

<https://youtu.be/Cun9F-XCang?list=PLZQdHaZXZ2baeQyHA-CjpaEFwmUIMf59B>

5) Confessing Sins to a Priest - A Biblical Defense: <https://youtu.be/Tm5tMjfQnck>

6) Four reasons why we confess to a priest: By Ken Yasinski:
<https://youtu.be/nIAhOvcD9ng>

7) Why and How to make confession? Step by step

<https://youtu.be/m0V93Q54HTY>

<https://youtu.be/aanWr-ugFS8>

<https://youtu.be/9DGRXfbFAuY> & <https://youtu.be/I4a5TA5C9Ts>

5) The Holy Eucharist: A) Holy Eucharist as Sacrament:

1) (Fr. Steven Bell, CSP) <https://youtu.be/TMSiHGTBdGk>

2) (Bishop. Barron) i) <https://youtu.be/PFsFv-TWVfY>

3) USCCB by Msgr. Zenz: <https://youtu.be/10RVv4vGan8>

B) Eucharist as sacrifice: by Bishop Barron

<https://youtu.be/z6ROgZfVu6o>

C) Eucharist as Real presence: Bishop Barron: https://youtu.be/sgy_TFeIyiM

Further lessons on Real Presence (Dona Cori Gibson) <https://youtu.be/A-H7N6xLBiE>

D) How to receive Holy Communion: <https://youtu.be/qdGkTdv4Dt4>

E) Holy Mass explained:

1) Catholic Mass explained (Fr. Jamie Utronkie)

<https://youtu.be/wm7SguxPsN4>

2) A video guide to Holy Mass (Catholic diocese of Chicago)

<https://youtu.be/co0qalRkEJs> -

3) Teaching the Mass <https://youtu.be/H5nzAxPY0Wo>

4) What is the Mass by Bishop Barron: <https://youtu.be/pIGXtDR2GCK>

F) Active participation in the Mass

1- <https://youtu.be/4TStUfzAWyA>

2- <https://youtu.be/oCZOi65dBCQ>

3- <https://youtu.be/YfeWjze3GVY>

6) Sacrament of Matrimony: a

1- Fr. Dave Dwyer CSP: <https://youtu.be/uq2RDYIOLrs>

2- Bishop Barron: <https://youtu.be/JDBhaeus3Sg>

3- Msgr. John Kasza:

https://youtu.be/MXprNe1iO_w?list=PLKFcTnVTi4X0kPsPCUiCeL8u-yL9TTU5P

4- Msgr. John Zenc (USCCB):

<https://youtu.be/nhWM4LxdAs4?list=PLKFcTnVTi4X0kPsPCUiCeL8u-yL9TTU5P>

7) Sacrament of Holy Orders:

1) Fr. Dwyer (Sacraments 101): <https://youtu.be/q904xIwxnSc>

2) <https://youtu.be/4CJU55ArXA>

3) Msgr. John Zenz (USCCB): <https://youtu.be/MWu9PaImjUM>

4) Fr. John Williamson: <https://youtu.be/5sIX4-IXHuQ>

