



Bible Study Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B

St. Maria Goretti, St. Augustine and St. Peter Claver Parishes
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“He approached, grasped her hand, and helped her up. Then the fever left her and she waited on them.” Mk. 1:31 NABRE

Reading I: Job 7:1-4, 6-7

JUST A TOUCH! The human touch is powerful. It can encourage, sooth and cure. Henri Nouwen captures the purpose of Christian living, that is, to touch the wounds and share the pain of others in these words: *“When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a warm and tender hand.”* Our goal as Christians is to imitate the creative touch of God the Father, as we chart our way through life; to imitate the healing touch of Jesus the Christ as we meet those who are hurting; to imitate the invigorating touch of the Holy Spirit as we prepare for eternal life. It takes just a touch of love.



Just A Touch of His Love.

In the first reading, Job needed a touch of love. The Book of Job is a story with a moral. The moral is that dreadful things do happen to good people. But God is faithful. He will never give us more than we can tolerate. Job, once wealthy and prosperous, is afflicted with absolute personal loss and sickness. Three friends attempt to comfort him with platitudes. Verses 1-7 are part of Job’s response to the first friend. He admits his desperate state by comparing himself to three of the most wretched states of life that he knows – that of a conscript in to military service, a hireling and a slave (vv. 1-2). He sees himself in bondage to his condition. He finds no rest. Part of his emptiness is the loss of his family and his personal illness. He sees no purpose in his existence. He seems to have lost all hope (vv. 5-7). Job needed a touch of healing and mercy, which he eventually received (42:7-17). **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Have you ever felt like Job? How do you overcome feelings of emptiness?



Known for Her Touch

Saint Josephine Bakhita was canonized in 2000, the Great Jubilee Year. Her journey to sainthood was a remarkable one. A former Sudanese slave, endured beatings and brandings, but eventually escaped to freedom from enslavement. Upon her baptism into the Catholic Church, Bakhita took the name Josephine and later became a member of the Daughters of Charity of Canossa in Italy. Known for her sanctity and common-sense wisdom during her 50 years as a religious sister, Saint Josephine Bakhita died in 1947. She is a witness of hope for victims of human trafficking.

Reading II: 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

JUST A TOUCH! In this portion of his letter, St. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to be willing to share themselves with others to spread the Gospel of the risen Christ. In effect, he encouraged them to touch others by the way they lived.

St. Paul is convinced that he cannot brag about his ministry because it was forced on him by the “touch” from Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus (v. 16, Acts 9:15). St. Paul compared himself to a slave, who is given a position of authority in the household. (see Job in the First Reading). If he was faithful, he would not be rewarded, because he was a slave. But if he failed in his commission, he would be punished (vv. 17-18). He described how he shared the pain and touched the wounds of others for the sake of the Gospel (vv. 21-23). He became weak for the sake of the weak, strong for the sake of the strong. Yet, he recognized that not all he touched would follow the Gospel. He tried to give everyone just a touch of God’s love. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Are you imitating St. Paul’s efforts to preach the Gospel to others?

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Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

Just A Touch! Young children spend more time with digital technology, that is, touch screens on electronic devices, than ever before. We are witnessing what may be called the "Touch Screen Generation." The technology itself is amazing. Toddlers can access information on a digital device like an *iPhone*, *iPad* or tablet including purchasing items on their parent's smart phone or tablet. The average phone user touches these addictive devices 2,617 a day. The human touch is powerful.

As Christians, we are required to teach our children the power of the human touch to bind wounds, heal broken hearts and calm anxiety. We must imitate the loving touch Jesus displayed in healing Simon's mother-in-law. After all, we all need a touch of love.

A HEALING TOUCH. Simon, Andrew, James and John were touched by the call of Jesus to follow Him. Jesus also took an interest in the deep concerns of their daily lives. Simon's mother-in-law was very ill. Mark demonstrates the severity of the illness by stating that she was not able to perform her duties of hospitality that were so important in the Hebrew household (v. 30). She needed a healing touch of love to revive her. Note that the apostles immediately told Jesus about her condition, which seemed to be an invitation for His divine healing. Jesus' healing often involved physical contact. Here, He grasped her hand and holds her up (v. 31). He touched her, healed her and sustained her. Her immediate reaction was a model of discipleship (Mk. 10:45). She waited on them. She touched Jesus and those who were there in the home. Jesus healed, and likely touched, all who were brought to him and who needed a touch of His healing power.

AN ENCOURAGING TOUCH. Early the next day, Jesus went to a deserted place to pray. He needed to get in touch with His Father. Simon Peter, on behalf of those looking for Jesus, that is, those who wanted to be touched by Jesus' ministry, found Him in prayer (vv. 36-37). "Everyone is looking for you" could be encouragement for Jesus to continue His ministry. It could also mean that the people needed Him and were waiting for a touch of His saving power. Jesus' response was a declaration of His purpose to touch all mankind with His Word and His redeeming power (vv. 38-39). **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Have you experienced Jesus healing power? When? What is the relationship between the healing power of Jesus and the Sacraments?

PRAY ABOUT IT!

Monday

Read Acts 9:15. By what power do you preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Tuesday

Read about the life of Saint Josephine Bakhita.

Wednesday

Read Mark 1: 29-31. Visit someone who is sick or home bound.

Thursday

Read: Mark 1:36-37. Today speak words of encouragement to an acquaintance.

Friday

Attend Mass and receive the Eucharist

JUST A TOUCH OF LOVE

The Catechism of the Catholic Church Teaches:

1503 Christ's compassion toward the sick and his many healings of every kind of infirmity are a resplendent sign that "God has visited his people" and that the Kingdom of God is close at hand. Jesus has the power not only to heal, but also to forgive sins; he has come to heal the whole man, soul and body; he is the physician the sick have need of. His compassion toward all who suffer goes so far that he identifies himself with them: "I was sick, and you visited me." His preferential love for the sick has not ceased through the centuries to draw the very special attention of Christians toward all those who suffer in body and soul. It is the source of tireless efforts to comfort them.

1504 Often Jesus asks the sick to believe. He makes use of signs to heal: spittle and the laying on of hands, mud and washing. The sick try to touch him, "for power came forth from him and healed them all." And so in the sacraments Christ continues to "touch" us in order to heal us.

Resources: The Gospel of Mark, The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, Revised Standard Version Second Catholic Edition, Ignatius Press San Francisco CA, 2010; pp 66-68; 1 Corinthians, Catholic Study Bible, Ignatius Press 2010. San Francisco. CA. 2010, pp. 296-298; Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year B, 2018, Brian Schmisk, Diana Macalintal and Jay Cormier, Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 52-55; Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. [https://www.networkworld.com/article/3092446/smartphones/we-touch-our-phones-2617-times-a-day-says-study.html](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-;The Sunday Readings, Cycle B, Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M. Franciscan Herald Press 1971, pp 93-100; The Gospel of Mark, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture, Mary Healy, Baker Academic, © 2008, pp. 47-48. <a href=) <http://cardinalsblog.adw.org/2014/02/saint-josephine-bakhita-witness-of-hope-for-victims-of-human-trafficking/#sthash.zc3Lbss1.dpuf>

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver and St. Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2014