

*Welcome to the Parishes of
St Andrew's Cathedral, Dundee
& Our Lady of Good Counsel, Broughty Ferry
& St Thomas of Canterbury, Arbroath*



St Thomas', Arbroath



St Andrew's Cathedral



Our Lady of Good Counsel

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

7 February 2021

Next Sunday:

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year of Mark (B)



**Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law
- this Sunday's Gospel.**

Finance matters:

Sincere thanks to those who continue to make their contributions to the upkeep of the parishes during these days of restrictions, either by standing order by or sending in cheques or placing cash through the door. All your general donations count as our offertory income. Thank you.

The **Cathedral 200 club winners** for January are:
1st: Rena Quinn - £50. 2nd: Bernard Colvin - £30
3rd: Lisa Anderson - £20.

The 200 Club will continue to be drawn every month during the current restrictions and everyone will be included. If you have any queries or would like to join call or text Kenny 07443 494719.

Our Prayers

for those who are sick: Canon Archie Brown, John McCarry, Margaret McMenemy, Isobel Blackmore, Robert Marshall, Peter McLaren, Karen Dammer, Katie Shephard, Mel Caullay, Bill Boland, Maria Robertson, Tony Beck, Jackey Forrest-Moore, Catherine Gallacher, Baby Ben Welsh, Thinley Chodron, Sharon McNally, Natalia Lucka, Benedict Stephens, Gillian Steedman, Steven Kennedy, Aubrey McMullan, Sonya Rostan, Lily Jane Douglas, Alexander McNeil, Bridie Mossey, Sheila McCallum, Marie Manunga, Allison Matthew;

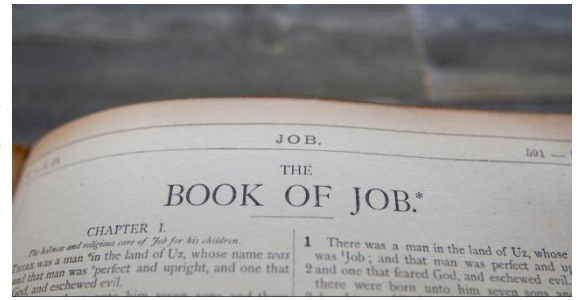
for those who have died recently: Alan Ramage, Walter Debattista, Kathleen Irvine, Billy Dailly;

those whose anniversaries fall at this time: Tom Gilray, Jack Ferrie, Irene Doak, Frances Sreenan, Derek Mousley, Irene Doak, Catherine Ravey, Bernice Connelly, Helen Lynch, Joe Swan, Betty Murphy, Patricia Eve, Frances Sreenan, Maurice McBride, Helen Dailly.

I was saddened to hear of the death of Alan Ramage, well known as a keyboard teacher in Dundee over many decades. Alan also helped out by playing the organ for funerals in parishes across the city and beyond. May he rest in peace.

Dear Friends and Parishioners,

“*She had the patience of Job*”; you’ve maybe heard it said, a reference to a character who features in a book belonging to the Old Testament *Wisdom literature*. However, a full reading of the story shows that the proverbial *patience of Job* seems true of him only in the first two chapters and then in the conclusion to the book.



While we customarily think of Job as a man who suffered serenely without his faith being threatened, the narrative reveals that he is not always a paragon of patience and virtue. At one point he actually curses the day he was born; at regular intervals he hurls protests and questions at God (who can of course cope with it all). Close to the beginning of the book, which is really a kind of parable, there is a conversation between God and *Satan* or *The Adversary*. As God praises Job’s faithfulness, the *Adversary* asks, *But why does Job serve God so well?*, insinuating that it is only because all goes so well for him in his contented life? What if all Job’s prosperity and family were taken away, the *Adversary* wagers? What then? These losses we find do not shake Job’s faith, and in his sorrow he even worships on his knees saying: *The Lord gave, the Lord has taken back; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

Then Satan proposes a more severe test: Job is struck down with sores, rejected and sitting in the city dump. Ignoring his wife’s advice, he refuses to “curse God and die”. Eventually three friends arrive to comfort Job but they find they cannot say a word to him and unfortunately for Job, Satan the *Adversary* will use them as a tool to increase his misery and attempt to drive him away from his God.

It is in Chapter Three that Job breaks his silence and we see his faith beginning to wane: it is not destroyed but it is severely tested as he curses the day of his birth and wonders why he is still “seeing the light of day” with all his suffering. Most of us have experienced a wavering (or worse) of the mind/heart between faith and doubt, especially if we have witnessed great suffering in those we love, or in the midst of pain or failure endured by ourselves. In some moments of deep pain and suffering there can be great faith and fortitude, and in other moments great doubt or despair. Serious physical suffering of course affects our emotional state. Like ourselves, Job is a human being....but God can cope with our human emotions and reactions. As the conversation continues over many chapters, his great faith returns from time to time, but with his body wasting away and his mind racked by pain and loss, he expresses fully his doubts and confusion. And perhaps most disturbing, there is the underlying assumption that all these tragedies are punishments of God because of sin, yet Job knows his innocence.

In the excerpt from the Book of Job set for this Sunday’s First Reading at Mass, we are in Chapter 7, where Job, in the midst of his grief, can take little in the way of solace from his friends. He compares his life with three common frustrating experiences known in the ancient world: “pressed service” in the military; the low paid non-productive work of a hired day labourer, and simple slavery. Job’s conclusion is that he will not see happiness again. The text is actually chosen in the Lectionary for this Sunday to encourage us **not** to lose heart, but to rejoice in how God comes to our rescue in Christ, as the Gospel text will reveal!

The Book of Job is well worth a read from start to finish. In it you find that Job’s search for the meaning of life carries him to the very depths of himself. While he knows his innocence and therefore knows deep down that his suffering is not a punishment for his sins, in his conversation with his friends he is anxious to justify himself and his own integrity and

expresses his own self vindication, in an entirely human way. Yet the way the author crafts the story, the questions he asks, show a certain spiritual self-sufficiency in Job, and his desire to find the meaning of his life on his own terms. Eventually he cries out to God, when he has exhausted himself in his ruminating: *Let the Almighty answer me!* (Chapter 31:verse 35). And God does indeed answer Job, but what an answer he gives! Job is told that he is not the one who should be raising questions, rather he is the one to be questioned by God!

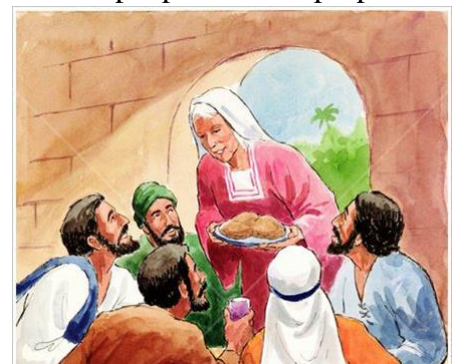
The effect of God's rhetorical questions to Job is profound. Questions like: *Where were you when I founded the earth? Have you ever given orders to the morning or sent the dawn to its post? Have you an inkling of the extent of the earth? Have you ever visited the place where the snow is kept?.....*and so on. These questions overwhelm Job with the realisation that he been speaking as if he could advise God on how to run the world, he, a mere creature, challenging and judging his Creator!

God raises questions which of course Job, as a mortal, cannot answer. How, as humans we long to have the answer to everything! Silenced, Job comes to this realisation and admits that he has no grounds for arguing with God: in this realisation he discovers the virtue of **humility** and places himself in the divine presence, repentant before God.

After his confession, a new door of life is opened to Job, a new consciousness of his relationship with God, the living God. Job now understands that God is perfect in his wisdom; therefore, his plan for Job (and for us) is perfect. Job's original religious faith in God was too small, too limited. Since his mind could not understand God's ways from beginning to end, Job's faith faltered. But now Job knows God, and although he still could not comprehend God's ways, he could trust God and God's wisdom, in spite of his own finite understanding and knowledge. Now God's work was complete in this man of faith.

The Book of Job is a powerful challenge to any notion that suffering or calamity in our life is is wielded by God as a judgment/punishment for human sin. Of the present pandemic, Pope Francis has said that it is **not** God's judgment on humanity, but it can facilitate God's call on people to judge what is most important to them and resolve to act accordingly from now on. The Holy Father said, addressing God, that "it is not the time of your judgment, but of our judgment: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others."

The Psalm this Sunday expresses Israel's faith in God as the healer of the broken-hearted, the one who seeks to bind up our wounds, and it forms a fitting *bridge* from the First Reading to the Gospel, where Jesus epitomises the healing work always associated with the Messiah. As Job was restored to a true faith in God, Jesus, when he heals, restores people to their proper role, status and place in the community: Peter's mother-in-law, healed by the Lord immediately returns to her role in the home, serving and waiting on the family, *returning the compliment* of service (so to speak), so that after a night of rest, Jesus is able to rise early for prayer and so continue his mission. The healing power of this Christ transforms our lives, helps us trust in times of trial, and surely frees us, even amidst struggles and sufferings, to praise him and place our hands in his.



God bless you and yours this week.

Kevin

KEEPING THIS SUNDAY HOLY WITH A HOME LITURGY

A prayer to begin

In faith and love, we ask you Father
to watch over your family.
We know that in your mercy,
no thought of ours is left unguarded,
no tear unheeded, no joy unnoticed.
Through the prayer of Jesus your Son,
may the blessings
promised to the poor in spirit,
lead us to the treasures
of your heavenly kingdom.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Read the Scriptures of the day

The Book of Job 7:1—4; 6—7

Job's lament

Our response - Psalm 146



**Praise the Lord
who heals the broken-hearted!**

Paul to the Corinthians: 1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23

*I should be punished if I did not preach the
Gospel*

The Gospel of Mark 1:14 - 20

*He cured many who were suffering from
diseases of one kind or another.*

Intercessions - in the light of today's Scriptures

For the universal Church. Help her Lord,
to follow the example of Saint Paul,
who made himself servant of all.

For those who at this time have to be
“everything to everyone”,
those who become poor with the poor
and those who suffer with the suffering.
Lord, be their strength and their reward.

For the sick,
and especially for those who are alone,
with no family or loved ones
to care for them.
Send them Lord, someone
who will bring them your care and solace.

For those whose lives today are filled only
with “pressed service” or “drudgery”,
those whose nights are taunted by
Suffering, and for all who are despairing.
Remember Lord, their distress;
release them from their plight of sorrow.

*Add your own intentions and conclude
with the Lord's prayer.*

Final Thought

During the coming week, let us proclaim
the nearness of Christ's Kingdom
and share in his ministry of healing
by the words we speak
and the actions we do,
and the attitudes we cultivate.

Thanks be to God.

