

Whatever villages or towns or countryside he entered, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak; and as many as touched it were healed.

Mark 6

Fifth Week of Ordinary Time: Feb. 5 - 11, 2012

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Fifth Week of Ordinary Time

The **Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time** has readings that deal with suffering and weakness. In **Mark's Gospel**, we see Jesus go to Simon Peter's house to heal Peter's mother-in-law. Crowds of people gather for healing outside the house. In the morning, Jesus slips away to pray, only to be searched out by Peter. Jesus says, "Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come."

Monday is the **Memorial of Saint Paul Miki and Companions**. Friday is the **Memorial of Saint Scholastica**.

The first reading this week, from the **First Book of Kings**, continues the story of David's family as his son the wise Solomon is now King of Israel. He is honored and praised for his wisdom, but falls away from the Lord and worships false gods, and for that the Lord tells him he will lose the Kingdom of Israel.

During the week, the fast-paced **Gospel of Mark** continues with stories of Jesus healing, teaching and challenging the authorities. As Jesus and his disciples step on shore, people scurry from all over to bring those in need of healing. The Pharisees, watching for Jesus to break rules, criticize his followers for not washing their hands. Jesus responds, "You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition." Jesus teaches his followers, "Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile." Jesus goes to Tyre and tries to slip into a house

Daily Prayer This Week

"My heart is moved with pity," Jesus says in one of the gospels this week, and we see his compassion in the healing stories in this week's gospels. This seems like the perfect time for us to ask Jesus for the healing we need in our lives.

We can take one gospel - for example the [Monday gospel](#) - and pray with it as if we were in the story. Jesus and his disciples cross the sea and as soon as they land, people rush to bring those who need healing to him. We can imagine ourselves seeing Jesus, the crowds gathering, the jostle of people bringing their sick on mats. People yelling for Jesus' attention.

Then we can imagine a moment where Jesus steps away from the throng and takes us aside. With loving eyes he looks at us and asks us, "Where do you need healing? Where can I be with you?"

It is there in that powerful moment that we can speak to Jesus as we would a friend. We can search our hearts and ask Jesus for the healing he already knows we need:

- "Help me, Jesus, with my impatience with my family. Let me not nag at those I love so much. Heal my lack of compassion for them."

- "Touch my heart, Jesus. Give me the selfless love I need in my marriage not to 'keep score.' Only with your help can I continue to be loving, even when it feels like some days I am the only one carrying my

unnoticed, but a foreign woman finds him and Jesus, impressed by her faith, heals her daughter. He heals a man of his deafness and speech impediment and like so many others he healed, he orders him not to tell anyone. “But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it.” Moved with pity, Jesus feeds the huge crowds who had followed him for three days. “They ate and were satisfied. They picked up the fragments left over – seven baskets. There were about four thousand people.”

The **Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time** offers a dramatic look at leprosy. The first reading from **Leviticus** has clear instructions: A leper has to live away from the community, cover his head and call out, “Unclean, unclean!” as people go near him. It emphasizes even more what it means that Jesus speaks with and touches someone who was such a pariah as he heals the leper in **Mark's Gospel**.

marriage.”

- “Jesus, I become afraid of failing and I feel like one of those people lying on a mat, waiting for you to touch my life. Yet when I sense your healing presence coming close, I roll away from you so you don't see me. Give me the courage I need to ask for your healing and to get up and answer your call for me to serve.”

When we pray with a gospel, we can carry an image of that prayer with us all day long. As we get out of bed in the morning, cook meals or go about our day, we can be aware of Jesus standing with us, ready to heal us, if only we would ask.

What is it that needs healing in me this week?
Where will I allow Jesus to touch my life?

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