

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 7, 2021

In this liturgical year we find ourselves in Liturgical year B, the Gospel of Mark. Last week we were introduced to Jesus, as a man unlike any before him, for he spoke with authority. The uncleaned recognized him but the beloved disciples and followers did not.

In this week's Gospel, those in need of healing are seeking him out. His reconciling ministry has begun, and he again drives out demons and heals diseases. Exhausted by the demands of the crowds, Jesus searches for a quiet place to pray, to regain his strength. Yet this is the very purpose of his call as Son of God: to bring Completeness and wholeness to those who will listen. Perhaps the greatest need is not only the healing needed but the lack of wholeness, the emptiness Jesus perceives among the listeners. The demons strive to fill that emptiness with evil, with lies and hatred. The true ministry for Jesus is to restore wholeness, completeness that we may recognize to whom we belong. The reign of God, the kingdom of God will take flesh when we ALL recognize to whom we belong. No wonder the demons recognize who Jesus is, they live in the awareness of SPIRIT. They pursue the vacancy and emptiness within us and prolong the pain.

So, In the book of Job we hear the same plea for stillness and serenity, "So I have been assigned months of misery and troubled nights... I am filled with restlessness." Don't we have the same plea during these months of COVID-19? We too long to be filled with stillness and serenity. What did Jesus do? Let us also Stop! find a quiet corner and place ourselves in stillness. As Thích Nhất Hạnh teaches, the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, BE PEACE.