

## **5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Year B**

## **RISEN LORD FREES TO SERVE**

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[www.sjti.ac.za/resources\\_homily.htm](http://www.sjti.ac.za/resources_homily.htm)

**First Reading:** Job 7:1-4, 6-7  
**Response:** **"Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted"** (Ps. 146:3)  
**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 146:1-6  
**Second Reading:** I Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23  
**Gospel:** Mark 1:29-39.

We read of a day in the life of our Lord with his apostles in Capernaum (Mk. 1:21-39). What is your day like with the Risen Lord? What can we offer to the Lord each day of our lives?

***"My God, accept my heart this day  
And make it wholly Thine,  
That I from Thee no more may stray,  
No more from Thee decline."***

*(Catherine Rowett, high Anglican)*

What is a day worth without the Lord? For Job, it is meaningless. **"Man's life on earth"** can be **"no better than hired drudgery"** (Job 7: 1).

Realizing his nothingness, Job cries out to God: **"Remember my life" even if it "is but a breath"** (Job 7:7).

The good person who confidently serves, **"praises the Lord who heals the broken-hearted"** (Ps. 146:3).

God raises us up and strengthens us to do his will and in serving him and our neighbour.

See how **"the Lord raises the lowly"** (Ps. 146:6), to share and to serve.

We see this in Jesus, the divine healer, raising Simon's mother-in-law. He **"took her by the hand and helped her up. And the fever left her"** (Mk. 1:31).

And when she was healed and strengthened by the Lord, **"she began to wait on them"** (Mk. 1:31). God raises us to help him in serving others. We are graced to grace others.

St. Paul, says, **"I have made myself the slave of everyone"** (I Cor. 9:19) and even **"punished if I do not preach the Good News"** (I Cor. 9:16).

Paul declares his mission as having **"made myself all things to all men"** (I Cor. 9:22).

***"Let ev'ry thought, and work, and word,  
To Thee be ever giv'n;  
Then life shall be Thy service, Lord,  
And death the gate of heaven."***

Our model is Jesus, the divine healer, who comes not to be served but to serve. (Gospel)

This happens today in Word and Sacrament. (Liturgy)

Although Jesus did miraculous healing, his main mission is to preach the Gospel. (Teaching)

See a day in the life of our Lord: **"Early in the morning, he went to a lonely place and prayed"** (Mk. 1:35). **"At evening, they brought to him all who were sick...and he cured many"** (Mk. 1:34). Can this be the model of our lifestyle: prayer and service? (Witness)

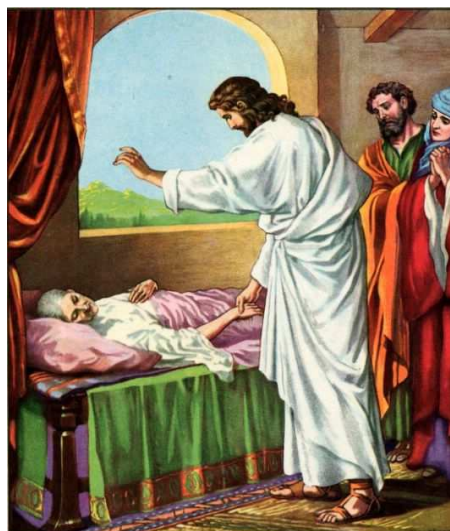
## FOR THE CHILDREN

A day in the life of Jesus who works and prays, *ora et labora*, consists in healing of the mother-in-law of Simon and the service she gives.

Jesus is in our midst today. See how he touches, healing us today and how we are sent to serve.

See Jesus as someone who is always there to help us. Why is he called the Divine Healer?

We show our time for Jesus by the way we pray and by the way we help and serve others.



## FOR TEENAGERS (Shared Christian Praxis)

**My Present Action:** Recall moments of healing in your life or healing of others.

**Your Story and Vision:** What does it mean to you? Any change of attitude?

**Church's Story:** Reflect upon the Church's experience of the divine Healer.

**Church's and Your Story:** Compare healing actions in the Church to your experience. How much are you in need of spiritual healing?

**Yours and Church's Vision:** Have a vision of healing and of building the Kingdom of God.

## RCIA

Once delivered from the grip of illness and strengthened by the Lord, we like Simon's mother-in-law, must consecrate our energies to serve God and neighbour. The Catechism reminds us that "by living with the mind of Christ, Christians hasten the coming of the Reign of God, 'a kingdom of justice, love and peace. They do not, for all that, abandon their earthly tasks; faithful to their master, they fulfill them with uprightness, patience and love" (CCC. 2046).

## LIFE EXPERIENCE

An early missionary experience at Emaphephetheni, in the Valley of a Thousand Hills comes to mind. I was saying Mass when suddenly the congregation gasped. I looked up and beheld a strange sight in the aisle. A wild-looking old woman dressed in skins was waving a *shoba* (tail of a beast). More tails were tied to her hair. She was prancing around, rolling her eyeballs. I sensed an evil force disrupting our liturgy. I felt a greater force move me to come down from the altar and approach her. She leapt high screaming and then turned around and fled out of the church. I calmly went back to the altar and finished the liturgy. I did not know who she was but the people knew and feared her as a powerful *isangoma* (medium or witchdoctor). Only when I got home did the reality hit me about what happened. What surprised me most, was not the dramatic behaviour of the *isangoma* but the way I reacted.

This experience, many years later, helped throw some light on my understanding of certain Jewish mystics, such as the *Zohar* and *Kabbalah*, who speak of evil forces around us in contrast to the good forces that strengthen and guide us, such as "Gabriel the prince of Strength, with Michael the prince of Lovingkindness, defeating the power of evil" (i) and ultimately the Messiah who conquers all.

(i) THE EARLY KABBALAH. Edit. Joseph Dan. Translat. Ronald C. Kiener. Paulist Press, N.Y. 1986. p.181.

'The Early Kabbalah' is one of the most mysterious books I've read. It is a Jewish mysticism which developed from the twelfth century onwards, based on the *Torah* (Law), *heikhalot* (palaces, Temple) and *merkavah* (divine chariot), all indicative of the *Shekinah* (Presence of God). It involves a variety of disciplines, even *gematria*, i.e. use of numbers. It also draws upon certain neo-Platonic and gnostic notions, like divine emanations as seen in the *Sefirot* (books). It does not interpret the Torah logically but symbolically, revealing mysteries and the struggle between good and evil. The final battle will be fought between Satan and the Messiah.

For us Christians, the Messiah is Jesus Christ, our redeemer, who conquered death and raises us up to love and serve God and His children.

## **LITTLE ANGELINA**

"He reminds me of Isadore," said Angelina, looking at a picture of Artemis Fowl, a talented child hero. Isadore is a cousin of Angelina in Mauritius. Children have a way of seeing likenesses and have imagination. I wonder what the children of Africa make of the pictures of Jesus which are mostly European. The bible says God created man in His own image. It seems man also creates God in his own image, especially according to culture. 'Zimbila zantabanye,' a Zulu proverb meaning "rock rabbits of the same mountain" see things the same way. Eoin Colfer might call it "confidence based on ignorance," (i) or do we just let "science take the magic out of everything," (ii) and left wondering if there still a place for imagination?

(i) **COLFER** Eoin. **ARTEMIS FOWL**. Puffin Books, London. England. 2002. p.44.

Artemis Fowl, a brilliant child detective, discovers that there is a fairy world. He sets to exploit it which is enough to raise anybody's curiosity, as he delves into fantasy and learns about fairy civilization. He has the genius to achieve his goals. He is however a narrow-minded person, doing only what he wants, regardless of other people's feelings. He certainly raises Angelina's interest as he puts the magic back into science. She should question his self-centredness and lack of respect for others. Is she aware that such a prodigy without morality is a dangerous threat to humanity? After all, he almost started a cross-species war between the human race and the fairy People!

Perhaps somebody, like Angelina, could show Artemis a greater way for his genius, to be like Christ, seeking not to be served but to serve.

(ii) *Opus cit.* p.94.

## **IMPORTANT WORD: Miracle**

The gospel speaks of the miracles of Jesus. He healed the sick, cast out demons and above all preached his Word (*Mk.1:39*). Miracles are signs of the Kingdom (*Jn.2.11*). What really counts is his Word. It demands all our attention. It spells out God, His power, His tremendous love and our salvation.

**Watchword:** "**And he cured many**" (*Mk.1:34*).

**Hebrew:** **Vayrape' rabim.**

**Greek:** **Kai etherapeusen pollous.**

**Latin:** **Et curavit multos.**

**French:** **Et guerit beaucoup.**

**Afrikaans:** **Hy het baie siekes gesond gemaak.**

**Zulu:** **Waphilisa-ke abaningi.**

**Xhosa:** **Waphilisa-ke abaninzi.**

**Sotho:** **A fodisa ba bangala.**

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## **CATECHETICS**

Lesson 59:

## **CATECHESIS IN MODERN TIME: CHRISTIAN WITNESS**

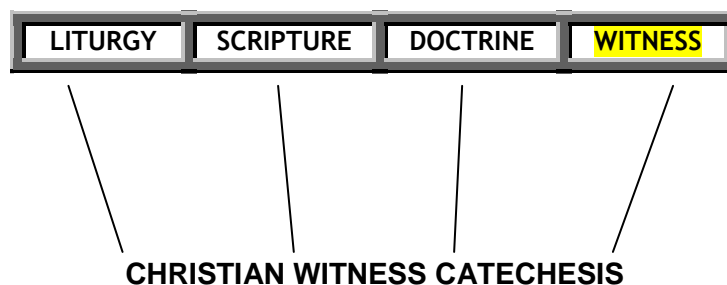
The new ‘**Catechism of the Catholic Church**’ mentions witness, Christian living, in terms of the holiness of the Church, in the light of its teachings, liturgy and history of saints.

“It is in the Church, in communion with all the baptized, that the Christian fulfills his vocation. From the Church he receives the Word of God containing the teachings of “law of Christ.” From the Church he receives the grace of the sacraments that sustains him on the “way.” From the Church he learns the example of holiness and recognizes its model and source in the all-holy Virgin Mary; he discerns it in the authentic witness of those who live; He discovers it in the spiritual tradition and long history of the saints who have gone before him and whom the liturgy celebrates in the rhythms of the sanctoral cycle.” (CCC. 2030)(i)

Witness is connected with worship and service. The Christian life style and whole way of life testify that Christ is alive. He is with us and we are the children of God. Our worship is a source climax and expression of our relationship with God. Being open to His grace we are brought in His love to adore and praise Him and offer all other forms of prayer as well, communicating with Him as happens with Father and children. We are his family and our worship also are moments of growing more in His grace. **Service** is also important in the Catechesis of **Christian Witness**. The love of God must reach out through the Christians to the whole world, “Go and teach all nations,” not just in word but in action. The saints are examples of witnesses in Christ.

Pfeifer and Manternach, when writing about a catechesis of Christian Witness, illustrate how saints can be models and guides. The first saint we look up to is **Mary**, the mother of Jesus, given to be the mother of us all as well, the new Eve. The simplicity of her life, the openness to the will of God and bringing Christ into the world, is a **model** for the whole Church. Many other **saints** are inspirations for catechesis as well. They show us what is courage and **commitment**, the noble Christian way to live and how Christ is calling us to witness in our way. ‘Witness’ is a source of catechesis. Remember, every person has the potential for holiness which expresses itself in a genuine love for God and neighbor. A ‘**Catechesis based on Christian Witness**’ focuses on this dimension.

KOINONIA	LITURGEIA	WORD	KERYGMA	<b>CATECHESIS</b>	<b>MARTYRIA</b>	DIAKONIA
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>WORSHIP</b>	<b>BIBLE</b>	<b>PREACHING</b>	<b>TEACHING</b>	<b>LIFE</b>	<b>MINISTRY</b>
CHURCH	LITURGY	SCRIPTURE	PROCLAMATION	<b>DOCTRINE</b>	<b>WITNESS</b>	SERVICE



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(i) **CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. Art. 2030.** Geoffrey Chapman, London, U.K. 1994. P.440.

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