

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
1st Homily Given by: Deacon Henry Ohaya
February 7, 2021 (7:30AM & 10AM Sunday Masses)
(The day after his Ordination to the Diaconate)

(Job 7:1-4, 6-7) (1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23) (Mark 1:29-39)

Follow the Way of Christ
To Receive Healing and Help Others Heal

Words of Thanksgiving

“My dear brothers and sisters, first and foremost, all glory and honor, praise and thanksgiving belong to Almighty God who has made it possible for me to become a deacon. Second, I thank my parents: my dad Hyacinth (who is with the Lord) and my mom, Paulina Ohaya, who sowed the seed of faith in me as a child. I thank my brothers and my sisters for their support and prayers. In a special way, I thank my wife, Ihuoma and our kids, Amarachi, Akunna, & Arinze. Ihuoma you are a rock! Thank you. I thank the members of the Ohaya family and my in-laws, the Unogus, for their support, their prayers, and their love. In a special way, I thank Fr. John, our priests and my deacon brothers, for their support, their prayers and their love. I also want to thank every parishioner of St. Philip Benizi Catholic Church. You are awesome...your prayers, your love and your support carried me through my diaconate formation. I want to thank the Nigerian Community and the African Community for your special prayers and your support. Your love carried me.

The Homily

My dear brothers and sisters, the question that I had early in life was, “Why do certain people have to experience so much suffering?”, but time and experience has taught me that suffering is a reality of life for all people. And so, the question now is, “How do we endure and persevere through our sufferings to receive the promise of God...how do we receive healing for the wounds of our sufferings...and how do we help others to heal?”

In our first reading, we hear of Job, a righteous man of God, who suffered the loss of his health, his family and his fortune, and after months of misery and pain, he expresses his feelings of hopelessness and unhappiness with life, and he wonders, when will things get better?

It is safe to say that the feelings of fear, anxiety, worry and apprehension that Job felt, is what so many people in our nation and the world presently feel due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Many have lost loved ones, jobs, health...and we all have lost the freedom to socialize and interact like we used to. We have been wounded, and just like Job we wonder, “When will things get better?”

So there is no doubt, brothers and sisters, that **HEALING IS WHAT WE NEED!**

In today's Gospel reading, we are reminded that Jesus not only understands our pain and suffering; He is able to heal us of our wounds. Through His actions and His words, Jesus reveals **THE WAY** we can receive healing **AND** help others to heal.

1. Spend time consistently with God in prayer.

Jesus began His days by spending time alone with God in prayer. My dear brothers and sisters, prayer is **foundational** to our healing. Prayer not only renews us and empowers us; it helps us to stay aligned with God's will for our lives.

TIME WITH GOD IN PRAYER IS KEY FOR OUR HEALING.

Jesus also spent considerable time in the synagogues, teaching and preaching. Staying in communion with the Church, especially by attending Mass consistently, allows us to be fed and nourished by the Eucharist and the Word. Meditating and reflecting on the Word of God and our life's experiences, allows us to receive, in revelation from God, the grace and knowledge and wisdom that we need for life!

TIME IN COMMUNION AND SCRIPTURE IS KEY FOR OUR HEALING!

What else did Jesus reveal to us, you may ask?

2. Pay attention to our actions and words.

Jesus, we know, is the greatest teacher and preacher of all time, but His power to heal people of their sufferings was what attracted many people to Him.

In His healing of Simon's mother-in-law, Jesus approached her, grasped her hand, and helped her up...and we're told that immediately the fever left her. So through the power of His loving presence and His show of compassion by the tenderness of His touch, Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law of her sickness.

The power, dear brothers and sisters, of our loving presence, and **HOW** we do what we do, **matters**. When we are patient and kind and merciful in how we treat others, we can help to heal them of their wounds. Our compassion can transform lives.

In response to being healed, we're told that Simon's mother-in-law begins to serve others. So true compassion not only heals, but it can also bring about a conversion of heart, such that those who receive healing work to help **others** to heal. **THAT IS A COMBO FOR GOD!**

So when you visit those who are sick or are recovering from an illness; when you visit those in prison or one who is mourning the loss of a loved one, your loving presence brings healing. When you speak a kind and encouraging word...when you show up for a friend who is in need...you bring healing. My dear brothers and sisters, it is the little things that we do in love that makes a difference.

Whether you are at church, or at home, or at work, or in the community,
TREAT OTHERS WITH COMPASSION TO HELP THEM HEAL from their wounds!

What else can we do to help others heal?

3. The need to spread love and serve all of God's people, especially those in need.

Jesus, we read, insisted on "going to the nearby villages" to teach and preach and heal, because, as He stated, His life's calling is to all people, especially those who are in need.

Those of us who are more fortunate are called to charity; to use our gifts in gratitude, either in cash or in kind, either in time or in talent, to help to heal those in need – such as the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the sick, the elderly, the migrant. The list, my dear brothers and sisters, is endless.

Whether they belong to our community or to other communities, **we are called** to serve and help bring healing to those in need; to spread peace and love and joy to all people. So let's drop our fears and prejudices and be welcoming and accepting of people who might express themselves differently. Because the truth of it all is that **we are all different expressions of the One, same God**. We are all children of God. We are brothers and sisters.

And so, my dear brothers and sisters, we all have been wounded, and we are all in need of healing.

We must find a way to endure and persevere; to do the will of God and receive His promise and His blessings. Jesus was very busy with His ministry, but He found a way to retreat from the busyness and the distractions of life to **spend time with God in prayer**, and He **treated others with compassion**, and He **served those in need**.

And so, we too must find a way...we must find a way to follow **THE WAY OF CHRIST**, so that we can **receive** healing **AND HELP OTHERS TO HEAL!**

May Christ heal us!
Amen.