

June 20, 2021

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jb 38:1, 8-11

2 Cor 5:14-17

Mk 4:35-41

GROW: A number of editorials, blog posts, and other commentaries of late have declared “languishing” as the “mood,” or dominant emotion, of 2021. This is not depression, but rather a series of emotions that wear away at our sense of purpose and belonging. Those who languish experience apathy and a lack of motivation, all while participating in the daily activities of life. Yes, I said to myself, that’s it exactly! After the craziness of these last 15 months ... I think these writers are on to something! Therefore, I am particularly moved by God’s providence and grace in providing an antidote to the emptiness of languishing in today’s Scriptures. In the second reading, Paul writes with such urgency that “the love of Christ impels us” to live not for ourselves, but for the sake of Christ who died for all. The word “impel” differs from “compel,” because it implies a strong moral force *from within*. And in the Gospel, we see that for Christians, that inner force springs from faith, a faith that can endure both the violent squalls of life and the sense of being adrift that we can’t always put our finger on. Like Paul, our faith impels us to refocus our lives on our love of Christ and others.

GO: It occurs to me that we Catholics have myriad opportunities to avail ourselves of those graces, and to strengthen our faith. Languishing can be replaced with flourishing, and a recapturing of the knowledge of who we belong to: the Lord. Praying for others during Mass, reading and discussing a spiritual book with a friend, volunteering at a soup kitchen or shelter, offering to help drive refugees or senior citizens to medical appointments, or participating in a young (or older) adult parish activity – these are all actions that empty us of apathy and fill us with gratitude. The pandemic has been tragic, and terrifying, and life-altering. But God remains steadfast. We will face our share of storms, but we can rest assured that Jesus is our anchor as we move forward in faith.

PRAY: Feeling blah? Re-read Paul’s letter (2 Cor 5:14-17) and ask God to help you remember that you are God’s beloved – with dignity, value, and purpose. Trust that “whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.”