

Epiphany V

“Now Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. Jesus came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.”

Jesus and his brand new chosen disciples have been to the synagogue and they go to the home of Simon whom we have come to know as St. Peter. They discover that Peter’s mother-in-law is sick and Jesus goes into her presence, holds her hand and she is healed from some sort of fever. We learn in this story that Jesus is a healer but equally important we see that Jesus’ healing occurs because he is present to the person who is hurting. There are some healing moments in the various gospels where Jesus speaks a word from afar and a healing occurs, but the vast majority of the time, healing occurs because Jesus is physically present to the person in need. It is important for us as his disciples to understand that healing is a part of our ministry and witness to our Lord, and while intercessory prayer from afar is of real value as we request healing moments for those dear to us, equally important is our presence in the life of a person who is injured and hurting.

We, as people of God, can be the instruments of God’s healing. This healing entails no spookiness, no magical words; it requires our presence as a loving, caring person concerned about another child of God who is before us. That person may need our physical touch, though sadly, at this time, Covid hinders that. They still may need our ears to listen, our eyes to observe, our minds to help question and discern, our hearts to console. We may find ourselves with a friend, a family member or indeed we may have a chance encounter, but the significant act we can offer, regardless of the circumstances, is to be present to that person.

I am convinced that every moment is a holy moment, because every moment is a moment in the presence of the Holy, of God. When you and I encounter another individual we have the opportunity to enhance or demean that moment. We may never know what impact we had

upon them at that moment, but there is the real possibility that our presence at that moment provided healing or refreshment for them at that time. Every human being carries all kinds of feelings and emotions with them wherever we might find ourselves. It is incumbent upon us, as God's instruments, to be aware that our ministries, our lives are given to us that we might be of value to one another, to be people who bind up wounds, to comfort the afflicted, to delight in the joys of others and raise up the weak and downtrodden. All of this work is healing work, a holy and creative vocation given to us by God for the well-being of all of God's people.

Amen