

This Week's Liturgy Calendar.

Ordinary Time of the Year. (B)

Weekdays – Year 1.

Sunday 7th February: Fifth Sunday of the Year. (B)

The Book of Job confronts the difficult question of suffering. In Old Testament times, the common explanation was that suffering was a punishment for sin. However, Job is a good man who suffers greatly. This results in his depressing view of life.

This sets the scene for the Gospel reading where we see Jesus concentrating not so much on the 'why?' of suffering but responding to actual suffering. He heals the sick, he proclaims the good news of salvation but still finds time for himself to step back, reflect and above all pray.

St. Paul, in the second reading, talks about his own ministry as an apostle and what it is that drives him on. All he says and does is done for the sake of the Gospel and Christ.

Monday 8th February: Weekday of fifth week of the year.

We begin reading from the Book of Genesis, the first book in the Bible. It consists of various traditions, which were passed from one generation to the next and were eventually written down. They were stories with a special significance – each had a specific message about God. The people at that time had no interest in how things happened in the past.

Today we have the first part of the story of creation. The message is that God made all things in this world out of nothing and he intended it to be good and beautiful.

In the Gospel, Jesus continues his healing mission. We are given a summary of Jesus' activities emphasising the enthusiasm of the crowd after the feeding of the 5000.

Tuesday 9th February: Weekday of fifth week of the year

We continue the creation story. Presented in the style of a teacher of the time, giving a pattern that is easy to remember. The point is that God is all powerful, that he made the world out of nothing.

In the Gospel passage, the Pharisees and some of the scribes were critical of the fact that Jesus did not observe the ritual purification rites. He reminds them that sincerity and inner purification are what are really important.

Wednesday 10th February: Memorial of St. Scholastica.

It is traditionally believed that St. Scholastica was the twin sister of St. Benedict. She is believed to have been in charge of a convent near Monte Cassino where he was Abbot. She devoted herself to a life of prayer and solitude. She could only visit her brother once a year under the strict rules under which they bound themselves. She died in 543, aged sixty-seven.

Thursday 11th February: Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes.

This date marks the anniversary of the first of eighteen apparitions of Our Lady to St. Bernadette in Lourdes in 1858. She identified herself as the Immaculate Conception. She appealed for pilgrims to do penance, to come in procession and for a church to be built there. Now over six million pilgrims go to Lourdes between April and October each year. Some go out of curiosity, some go looking for a physical cure, some go looking for spiritual healing, some go to renew or even find their faith in God. At the heart of a pilgrimage are the two great processions – the Blessed Sacrament Procession and the Marian (Torchlight Procession). The praying of the Rosary is also stressed but the phrase in the roof of the Rosary basilica sums up the message of Lourdes – Through Mary to Jesus.

Today is kept throughout the world as the World day of Prayer for the Sick.

Genesis continues with the story of creation and, in particular, the creation of woman. It stresses that woman is equal to man. She is worthy to share his life with him. It is God's will that one man and one woman should form a partnership that would be lifelong and exclusive.

The Gospel stresses that the gift of faith is not restricted to the Jewish people. It highlights the tension that existed in the early Church between Jew and Gentile and what was required of both to become followers of Jesus.

Friday 12th February: Weekday of fifth week of the year.

We are given the story of the Fall. Humanity has always been subject to evil and temptation. We inherit that in that we call original sin. We misused the freedom given to us by God.

This time Jesus uses a sign to carry out his healing. It is a forerunner to the sacraments.

Saturday 13th February: Weekday of fifth week of the year

The consequence of our fall from grace is that people would suffer but there is the promise of the saviour given to us.

We are given an account of the multiplication of the loaves and fish – ultimately leading us to the establishment of the Eucharist.

