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## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

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February 07, 2021  
Anglican Parish of Raymond Terrace  
[www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org](http://www.stjohnsraymondterrace.org)

## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Pray:

May I speak to you in the name of GOD – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen



The note of disbelief in Isaiah's voice is unmistakable. He has been challenging Israel to make comparisons between GOD and idols of wood and gold. It's almost laughable. There is no possible comparison. Israel, of all peoples, should know. GOD is incomparable. Isaiah reminds them, in case they have forgotten, that it is the GOD of ALL Creation of which we are speaking. The creator and sustainer of all that is. ^The powerbrokers of this world are like chess pieces under his fingers (verse 23). They are blown about like insubstantial plant life. When the people of Israel look up at the creation around them, they are to remember that it is their GOD who made it all.

So, what is their problem? ^They think GOD has forgotten them and that their experience of exile

indicates that perhaps, after all, He is not so powerful and great (verse 27). They are downtrodden and weak. The people who had rejoiced in their deliverance from slavery in Egypt were now little more than slaves once again – exhausted, weak, demoralised, powerless, and hopeless. It is to them that this message comes. The endlessly powerful GOD will give them strength to cope. Where everyone else would collapse, they would be given the strength of eagles, the swiftness and power of runners and the ability to persist when they want to give up in despair.

The description we have of JESUS' ministry is the counterpoint to Isaiah's majestic claims. It is domestic and small scale. Simon's sick mother-in-law is taken by the hand and the fever leaves her (Mark 1:31). Queues of sick and demon-possessed people are healed and delivered (Mark 1: 32-34). The source of JESUS' power to heal the sick and weak is founded upon a cultivated and vibrant relationship with His Father (Mark 1: 35-39) – is the same GOD of creation who helped Israel to cope

in exile and who is with JESUS as He takes the gospel to neighbouring towns.



Imagine going to visit some relatives or friends who live far from you. You and your family plan to spend the visit catching up, doing some fun things, and simply relaxing. If some strangers interrupted your visit by asking for your help or your parents' help, which cut into your fun time, how would you react?

Now think about your response in the light of what JESUS does in today's Gospel. The first part shows us that JESUS cared deeply about His friends and the loved ones of His friends. At Peter's house, He cures Peter's mother-in-law who is ill. Immediately she is restored to health. The Gospel, however, doesn't end there. JESUS would certainly have enjoyed some quiet time with His friends in Capernaum. They, in turn, must have appreciated having Him all to themselves. Yet that night, some people came to the house asking for help and healing. So, JESUS helped them. He makes time for

everybody who needs Him – not just family and friends. In fact, anyone who comes to JESUS as a stranger did not leave that way. After He had touched them and spoke to them, they left as friends. Notice, too, that early the next morning, JESUS went off by Himself to pray.

**THIS THE FIRST THING HE DOES – WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?**

JESUS made time for prayer – to be alone with GOD the Father. This shows us how much value He placed on this relationship with GOD – which in turn enabled Him to love all people with abandon. His relationship with GOD, His loving Father, kept Him centred, peaceful, and aware of the tremendous power of love within Him and how it could transform others.

When we pray with JESUS, when we acknowledge the presence of JESUS in our lives both as individuals and as a Church, we open ourselves to this same transformative power of love. We become able to truly love as JESUS did. The ways that JESUS experienced His Father's love and shared it with others is a model for

each one of us who wants to be His disciple. His mission was to bring the Good News of GOD's love and salvation to all people. He did so by preaching, healing, and teaching. As His disciples, we carry on that mission today.

JESUS had the ability to do what He had to do all the time. Despite all His activity, He did not neglect to spend time with alone with the Father in prayer. He had the custom of rising before dawn to go to a lonely place to pray. His communication with the Father was essential for His life and mission. His relationship with the Father was the source of His strength and courage and the only way He could constantly give of Himself to others. It's easy for us humans to say that we are too busy to pray. Perhaps today we can draw our inspiration from JESUS and consider how we can make more time for prayer. Perhaps we can get up a little bit earlier to spend some quiet time without distractions, so that we are better able to be GOD's presence and love in the world.



**May we pray:**

JESUS our healer, when we are laid low by pain, suffering or doubt, grasp us by the hand and raise us up. Strengthen us to serve and follow you – who live and reign with GOD the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one GOD, now and forever. Amen

All-Age Lectionary Services – Scripture Union – 2011 – Milton Keynes, England

GOD's WORD Daily Reflections 2021 St Paul's Publications 31/01/21

Celebrating the Lectionary – Year B – Garratt Publishing, Mulgrave, VIC 2020

Daily Prayer 2021, Liturgy Training Publications. Archdiocese of Chicago IL 60609