

## Reflection for Saturday 3 October

Throughout this week the first reading at Mass on ferial days has been from the Book of Job. This book is unique in the Bible.

Job is a very wealthy man, probably a farmer, with 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, and 500 she asses. He has a large family of three daughters and seven sons and a large household of servants. Job is also a very righteous and devout man, living close to God. Wealth was a sign of God's favour.

Now we come to something unique in Scripture. In verse 6 to 12 in the first chapter of Job, God and Satan meet. They discuss Job. Satan says to God that Job is so attached to his possessions that if God were to take them all away Job would then curse him to his face. God makes a deal with Satan. In vs 12 the Lord says to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only upon himself do not put forth your hand." In other words, God purposely hands Job over to the kingdom and power of Satan, thus removing the covenant he had made with Abraham from Job. God is testing both Job and Satan.

Two things now happen to Job: his children are all killed, and he loses all his possessions. Job is in Satan's power. Secondly, Satan afflicts Job with boils from head to foot and he sits among the ashes scraping these boils with a potsherd. Job could not have been in a worse mess and predicament. He is at his lowest in every respect. His wife then taunts him about his state but Job will not curse God.

Job is then met by three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. Most of the rest of the book is about the conversation Job has with these friends about why he has been abandoned by God. The questions they ask, and the reasons they give, make Job delve into every aspect of his life as to why he could have sinned against God. He couldn't find a reason and so pleads his innocence.

Job reaches the depths of despair and he cries out for someone to take his side and plead for him to God. So in chapter 19 vs 25 we come to those famous words, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth." His Redeemer is someone who understands Job and will plead his case to God. God hears Job's call and tells him that his knowledge of the Lord's ways are limited. Job then repents of any sin he could have committed.

In the end God knows that Job has had enough torment from Satan. Satan is proved wrong. In spite of all Job suffers, never once did Job curse God. His faith in God is challenged but he remains faithful. Job is vindicated and God restores the covenant with him and all his fortunes twofold.

What is God saying to us in his dealings with Job?

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