

5th Sunday Ordinary Time
Deacon Chris
Job 7:1-4,6-7
Ps 147
1 Corinthians 9:16-19,22-23
Mark 1:29-39

My favorite Winnie the Pooh character is Eeyore the Donkey. He had such a sad outlook but he never seemed to be defeated. It was just his lot in life. But he had some iconic quotes:

"Not much of a house, just right for not much of a donkey."

"It's the only cloud in the sky and it's drizzling, right on me. Somehow, I'm not surprised."

"I was so upset, I forgot to be happy."

"The sky has finally fallen. Always knew it would."

(NE Ohioans can relate) "The nicest thing about the rain is that it always stops. Eventually."

I think we have either been Eeyore sometime in our lives, or we have know people who have. But we all get him.

In our first reading we hear Job sounding a little like Eeyore. He is lamenting all the suffering that God has allowed this most innocent of men to suffer. The story of Job tells us that he has never spoken out or acted against God, so he is the least deserving of this great suffering.

In his complaining, he is not offending God, but he is being honest with his state in life. Job does not avoid the suffering. He enters right into it. Stays there, never losing faith.

If you read the Book of Job you will see that his friends came to comfort him. At first, they were so taken aback by his grotesque physical illness that they just sat quietly with him. They accompanied him.

That reminds me of another Eeyore quote, "Thanks for noticin' me.." You think, ahh, he's so humble and cute, who wouldn't notice him?

But that is what happens to many who are afflicted with some kind of physical illness, or emotional collapse, or homelessness. We don't notice them.

In our Gospel today, once the apostles tell Jesus what is going on with Peter's mother in law, Jesus takes notice of her, accompanies her, and heals her...As he then does when the whole town starts to bring those that

are ill or afflicted with demons. He notices them, accompanies and heals them.

But what does he do next? He goes off to pray. And then he tells his disciples, "Let us go on...". To other places. There are so many more that need to hear me. There are so many more that need to be noticed, accompanied and healed.

This is what His Church does. We notice, accompany and heal, and then we come to pray together. Then we as Church must also 'go on.' Go on to the next person who needs to be noticed. Not stay where healing has already happened, but 'go on' to share this with the world.

How are we at Immaculate Conception Parish doing at this? How are we at noticing, accompanying and being part of the healing for those in our parish, our community, our families, our world? Do we stay within ourselves, or do we go on? Do we help people grow in faith, but, most importantly, do we help them 'go on.' This last part is called discipleship.

This is what we are trying to find out with the Parish Survey. We are trying to find out how well we are making disciples who want to help Jesus 'go on.'

I hope all of you can take part in the survey. We need one from every adult. We need an honest assessment of ourselves.

You will see questions about your personal faith, but you will also see questions about our parish, our pastor, and all our ministries.

Our diocesan Church is going through changes. I have taken calls, or talked with you after Mass, some of you have come to my office, or Fr's office, and lamented about what may happen after our pastor retires. Will we have a priest? What will happen to our parish?

It can be scary. We can act like Eeyore and say "The sky has finally fallen. Always knew it would."

Or we can plan for the future. We can look at this survey as a way to see how we can be better disciples, and make better disciples who help with noticing, accompanying and healing, praying, and then 'Going on' to find others who are suffering in some way who need to hear this Good News.