

**Homily for February 9, 2003
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time B**

By Father Charles Bowes

**Job 7:1-4, 6-7
1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23
Mark 1:29-39**

Through Jesus, God heals us where we are but doesn't leave us where we are.

The real miracle in this story of Mark chapter one is not that Simon's mother-in-law was cured of a fever, but that she began a new life of service and discipleship in response to who Jesus is, the revelation of no less than God.

These miracle stories are not attempts to prove Jesus' divinity. The issue is the source of the power behind the miracle. In the gospel, the challenge is to see God's power at work in the human ministry of Jesus. The way this is portrayed here is significant. Jesus takes the woman by the hand and lifts her up (raises her up). Immediately she begins to serve. Through Christ, God meets us where we are but does not leave us where we are. God doesn't confirm us in our complacency, doesn't allow us to keep God and ourselves securely within the four walls of our own familiar surroundings, but calls us to a life of service and discipleship.

An interesting theme continued in this gospel is that of the requirement "to keep quiet" on the part of those spirits who recognize the power behind Jesus -

called the Messianic secret. Full revelation of God at work in Jesus will not be seen until the crucifixion and subsequent resurrection wherein a Roman centurion, a pagan, proclaims, "Truly, this was the Son of God."

At our Masses this weekend we are privileged to hear a story of how God acts through Jesus in one of our parishioners - a story which just simply has to be told.

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