

Homily
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 4, 2024

Who gets plenty of rest every night? Sleep is essential for physical and mental well-being. The CDC says the average adult needs 7 hours of sleep a night. Getting less than that on a regular basis can lead to health problems, including high blood pressure.

Who gets plenty of exercise and physical activity? Exercise and physical activity are great ways to feel better, boost our health and have fun. The DHHS recommends adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity weekly.

Who eats properly all the time? We need a balanced diet. We need the proper food intake to stay healthy. The National Institute of Health has determined that 42.4 percent of adults are obese or severely obese. I know I fall in that category.

Who prays regularly? The average Christian prays less than 15 minutes daily. First Thessalonians tells us to, "Pray without ceasing." Philippians says, "Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God."

It sounds like if we just eat right and sleep, exercise and pray enough, we will be just fine. Although I do not do any of these as I should, I believe life would still be tough if I did. But I do believe life would be better.

Still, we all struggle with rest. The most prevalent consequence is not thinking clearly. During our morning prayer and devotionals, my wife couldn't find her reading glasses, so got up, went into the other room, grabbed a pair and proceeded to place them on her face over her other reading glasses. We both laughed, but I laughed harder.

Not to be outdone, I made a cup of coffee on our Keurig. Later, I went to get it only to realize it had already cooled, so I placed it in the microwave for 30 seconds. Wanting another cup of coffee, I went to the Keurig and made another cup. It also cooled, so I placed it in the microwave only to realize the first cup was still there, and it was now cold. This time, she laughed harder.

We all have our mission, just as Jesus had His mission. After healing Simon's mother-in-law, curing the sick of the whole town and driving out many demons, he rose early, before dawn, probably to avoid the crowds, to pray. This is key; He sought solitude and He sought to pray. He is human just like us and must rest and pray to keep up His strength. Yet, when Simon and the others found Him, Jesus said, "Let us go on to the nearby villages. For this purpose have I come."

We all have a purpose; we all have a mission.

I'm tired, I don't eat right, I don't exercise regularly, and I don't pray enough. Can anyone relate to this?

It's important to know that even though we may not be doing everything we can to be healthy in body, mind or spirit, the struggles we experience are not always our fault. Look at Job. Our first reading shows how Job is struggling. Every day seems to drag on with no joy, no happiness. He hasn't lost faith, but the struggles remain. What we don't hear is how it all started and how it ends. In the beginning of Job, we see, "...a blameless and upright man ... who feared God and avoided evil," who was happy, healthy and wealthy. We then witness a conversation between God and Satan. Satan challenges God, that Job would not be such, "...a blameless and upright man ... who feared God and avoided evil," if God took all this away. God accepts the challenge, allowing Satan to do his worst, but not to touch Job directly. In the end, Job survives, never loses faith and is rewarded with even greater happiness, wealth and health, dying, "old and full of years."

We need to remember that it is our faith that protects us, keeps us going in the midst of our struggles. And it is through faith that we do what we need to do to keep going, maintaining our body, mind and soul. We rest, we eat properly, we exercise regularly and we pray unceasingly.

God is love and in His love only wants what is best for us. We, in turn, love Him, love one another and give thanks in all things, both the good and the bad. God loves us just as we are. This is why He allows evil in the world. We don't like it, but He allows it. If He didn't, we wouldn't exist, because sometimes we ourselves allow evil in our lives. That's our human nature. That's God's Will. And then we seek His forgiveness, we receive His absolution and we come together to praise and pray to our Lord and Savior. And we continue on our journey towards Him until we see Him face to face and hear those glorious words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."