
4 Saturday

SATURDAY 26th Week of the Year
St Francis of Assisi

Job 42: 1-3, 5-6, 12-16
Ps 118: 66,71,75,91,125,130
Luke 10: 17 - 24

On a few days of this week, the first readings have been from the Book of Job. Today's is from the very end of the book, Job's final answer to God, and how God restored Job's family and fortunes. (The reading omits the Lord's rebuke to the three wise men, the friends who'd badly advised Job in his previous misfortune). This book remains relevant for anyone who tries to understand the problem of evil and the sufferings of innocent people. Many modern people refuse to accept a God whom they say is cruel and hateful because of what He "allows" to happen. Job too was angry with God and argued with Him. And if we have such feelings ourselves sometimes, it's nothing unnatural or blameworthy. We certainly should not blame people for feeling that way. We simply do not really understand God, nor can we expect to --- He is beyond our understanding. The 'cruel' or 'unjust' or 'uncaring' God people criticise is not in fact God at all. All we're doing is, as Job said, "obscuring your designs with (our) empty-headed words".

Yet there is the real problem of evil, and the sufferings and tragedies we have to face. We look for reasons and explanations, and come up with the same conventional blaming of others or of the God we conceive in our own ideas. But this is a second-hand God, a "hearsay" one (Job's word). Through his experience, Job came to know the mystery of God, and bowed before that mystery. His questions were not answered, but he came to realise that God's wisdom can give unexpected meaning to such realities of life as suffering and death.