

Daily Homily
Week Eleven in Ordinary Time
15 June 2020
[USCCB Daily Reading](#)

I love in the liturgy when the Psalm is a perfect response to the first reading and a perfect response to life.

We continue on from last week to hear the abominable journey of King Ahab and his lunatic queen, Jezebel. Ahab, in the true style of a five year old who does not get his way, is pouting in his castle. He wants a piece of land owned by Naboth. It is a vineyard. He even offers a better vineyard to Naboth as an exchange. However, land for ancient people is more than just dirt. It is legacy and family and memories and sentimentality. Naboth's family has owned that vineyard for generations. The blood, sweat, and tears of his ancestry has been soaking that land. To Naboth the land is priceless. Ahab pouts. Jezebel steps in. In a twisted and deranged way, she plots and plans and connives for Naboth's ruin. Innocently and without being aware of her plots for his demise, Naboth, sadly, plays the pawn and dies at her hands – over dirt. It is a sad story of the innocent being, once again, prey to the unbridled power and authority of tyranny. (Don't worry, the story isn't over. Wait for tomorrow when God's prophet, Elijah, once again, is made aware of their deranged dealings.)

After reading this and having to sit with where this story ends and concludes, at least for today, it feels awful. So the Psalm response for today: "Lord, listen to my groaning." What a line! What a phrase!

Groan means to utter a deep, low-toned breath expressive of grief or pain, to murmur or lament, to complain and express disapproval.

The Psalmist's prayer, that we pray today, is asking God to hear our complaints, our disapprovals, our laments. We are asking God to listen to what is causing us pain or grief that is either on the surface of our life or a pain and grief that is deep, down in our psyche and soul.

Sometimes we think that when we go before God, we need to look perfect, be perfect, act perfect. Some think that prayer should be always positive and happy and full of praise and thanksgiving. I always find it interesting when individuals come in to prepare the funeral for a relative and they will say, "Father, we want happy readings and upbeat music. We don't want this to be sad." I "get" what they are saying, however, it is a funeral. Someone has died. This is sad. Being sad, sometimes, is ok. Built into our ritual for the "Mass of Christian Burial" is the great wisdom of addressing all the emotions. We acknowledge the loss and sadness of the time, but we also point beyond it to the mercy of God's judgment, to forgiveness of sin, to the hope of resurrection, and to a share in eternal life.

Can we be ourselves before the Lord? Do we always have to put on a happy face in front of God? God knows us better than we know ourselves. God goes beyond the lies of Ahab and Jezebel, God will certainly lift our masks of cover-up. God wants our true, authentic self. God wants our best self and our diminished self.

When you watch the news tonight, when you see the tensions of prejudice still at play in our nation, when you see the disregard for God or faith, when you acknowledge your own tensions and tragedies, when you find someone unmotivated or lukewarm in life, when you are treated like a doormat by some other person... groan. Do not become jaded or cynical by complaining unceasingly to other people. Confiding in a trusted friend is great, but telling every neighbor that you walk by, your postal carrier, your hairdresser/barber, your barista, and the person checking out your food at Aldi's is probably not the healthiest thing to do. Go to God. Do not hesitate to offer this prayer, the prayer of the Psalmist, and groan.