

**Integrity Tested by Trials**      Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time      Monday,  
September 26, 2016    8:15 AM    **Job 1:6-22;**    Lk 9:46-50    (Sts. Cosmas and Damian,  
martyrs)    (What are we really made of, and how can that be refined through trial rather than  
destroy it/be destroyed by it?)

Every two years we read from **the Book of Job**, a unique book in the Bible. In the Old Testament it is counted among the Writings, but its origin must be outside of the Hebrew culture because neither God nor Satan play the actual proper role that each plays in ordinary stories of Hebrew origin. So we can imagine that this book had some origin outside of Israel, probably in Babylon and was **probably incorporated into Jewish culture during the Babylonian exile.**

Now we have to look through the book beyond the structure of the story and see what it is really about. **This is about the issue of righteousness or integrity;** that would be a better word in modern language. This is about a matter of integrity, honesty or you even could say **basic human goodness.** The argument is advanced: there are good people in the world and bad. But why? **The argument here is, well, good people are good because God is good to them.** They are surrounded with blessings. They succeed. They are healthy. They don't have problems. That's the accusation put in the mouth of Satan. Think about this. **Many people believe this.** If you interview criminals, they will tell you about all the raw deals they have received in life and why all the injustices they suffered somehow justify their life of crime. In a way, there is a logic to it. Why should I be good? Life has not been good to me.

**So this is a story about a man who was blessed and righteous,** therefore a man of great integrity, a man of great reverence for God and general goodness. And **layer after layer all these blessings are removed.** He is stripped down to the very core of who he is. **But he remains the same person, a man of integrity, a man of basic goodness, a person of good character.**

And the point is that **we can be good** and we can be just and we can be a people of integrity **even if our lives are very poor** and we are surrounded with misfortune and if we are in poor health and if we have bad neighbors and we don't succeed. **That does not prevent us from being good.** That's the point of the story, and is worth thinking about, especially when we are assailed, as everyone is at some point, with trials. **Trials are called tests.** What do they test? Our character, our fiber, our fundamental substance. **What are we really made of, and how can that be refined through trial rather than destroy it/be destroyed by it?**