

“Healing of the Leper”

In last week’s Gospel, we were told that Jesus Christ came as one of us, in human flesh and that He came with authority and power over both the visible and the invisible world. This week is a continuation of Mark’s showing us that God sees the heart and not our physical infirmities or our sins.

Our first reading, introduces us to what happens to someone who had leprosy in the Old Testament. We are told they become outcasts, with no home, friends, or family. They are all alone with those who have the same disease. Our second reading tells us that we glorify God by good examples.

In our Gospel reading, we are introduced to another healing by Jesus. The leper had been an outcast probably for a long time and he asked Jesus to heal him. Mark tells us that Jesus was moved with pity for the man. In His mercy, Jesus stretched out His hand to touch him. This must have been a moving experience for the man. The man had probably not been touched by another human being in a long time. The man was touched by Love itself.

This man experienced a love that reaches out to all of us. A love that says, **“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy...”** (Matt 11:28-30). It is Love that came down from heaven from His throne as the Son of God.

Jesus not only healed the leper, but restored his dignity by healing him and restoring him back into his community, his home, and his family. By touching him, and healing him, Jesus took on the man’s burden in the eyes of Jewish society. According to Jewish law, Jesus became unclean because He touched the leper and now, He became the outcast probably for a period of time that the Jewish society could ascertain that He had not contracted leprosy. So, Jesus could no longer openly enter any of the towns until the end of the period.

We also are lepers in one way or another because we have being deformed by the ugliness of sin. Our sins especially the deadly sins separate us from the love of God that is always ours to embrace. By our self-separation, like the leper, we become outcasts. But Jesus has come to free us from our burden. All we have to do is, with humble hearts go to Him in the Sacrament of reconciliation.

Ash Wednesday will be upon us in a few days. It is a day that leads us to a period of 40 days of Lent of imitating Jesus who was in the desert for 40 days. Jesus had done the heavy lifting by defeating the devil in the desert and on the cross. So His yoke He asks us to take, is easy. In His love, He willingly laid down His life for us so we can become the children of God. When we confess our sins in the Sacrament of reconciliation, similarly to what He did with the leper, Jesus reaches out His hand and touches us, and through the words of absolution He puts in the mouth of the priest, Jesus tells us that **“I do will it. Be made clean.”**

For those who believe in Him, Jesus continues to pour His love upon us by giving Himself to us as food and drink. It is not just any food and drink. It is His flesh and Blood that will give us eternal life. As we come to receive His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in the Eucharist, let us resolve in our hearts that we will go out and spread His gospel by doing whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and gracious thereby, living virtuous lives.