

Pastor's Letter

Feb. 11, 2024—6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Church Family,

In our Gospel reading for today, a man with leprosy comes up to Jesus and asks the Lord to heal him. That took a lot of courage. Our first reading from the book of Leviticus reminds us of the isolation from society that came about because of leprosy. People were forced to live apart from the community. They even had to shout out to warn people to stay away from them. They couldn't even worship with everyone else. They were total outcasts. They were not welcome anywhere.

When this person with leprosy comes up to Jesus, then, he is taking a big risk. What if Jesus refuses to help and runs him off? It probably wouldn't have been the first time he was rejected. But with determination and faith and probably some desperation, he comes and asks Jesus for help. And to his relief and maybe to his surprise, he receives it. He is healed. His life is changed forever. Jesus sends him to the priests to be received back into the community.

This week we begin the season of Lent. One of the things that we emphasize in Lent is the call to repentance. We are encouraged to examine our lives and face up to the ways that we are not living out our faith, either by things that we are doing that are contrary to God's commands or the things that we are not doing that we should be for love of God and our neighbor. This kind of soul searching is not easy. We don't like to look at the dark side of ourselves. But if we don't we will never do what we need to do to get better. If we keep kidding ourselves that we are not that bad we will not become the healthy and whole human beings that we want to be and that God wants us to be.

And God does want us to be healthy and whole. Maybe when we confess our sins we are afraid that God will be disgusted with us. Maybe when we go to confession we are afraid that the priest will be disappointed in us. Nothing could be further from the truth. When the leper in our Gospel story came to Jesus, he said to him, "If you wish, you can make me clean." And Jesus response was, "I do will it. Be made clean." The will of God in Jesus Christ, his dearest desire for us, is for us to experience the fullest life possible by staying as close to him as possible. His greatest joy is when someone who is separated from him by sin comes back into communion with him. And nothing makes a priest happier than being allowed to be a part of that. Communion is restored when we allow him to heal us through confession. In the season of Lent, we are entering our season of healing. May God give us the courage to come to him and trust his healing love.

Blessings,

Fr. Scott