

Jesus Embraces the Culturally Marginalized

Today's readings are about forced quarantine. On one level they are about diseases that might be contagious. On another level they are about ritual impurity that was contagious. The Israelites believed that to stand before God in worship, one's body had to be physically intact—no fractures or missing body parts, no open wounds, no oozing body fluids. Skin lesions like those associated with leprosy made one ritually unclean or impure. Furthermore, to touch one with such a disease was to become unclean oneself. The ritual impurity was considered contagious, not necessarily the disease. Unclean people were socially and religiously ostracized.

In the Gospel story, Jesus completely neutralized this practice. Touching the leprosy and thus unclean man, Jesus not only didn't become unclean himself, but he actually made the man clean again. The issue here is not merely one of healing. It is a matter of reincorporating the marginalized man into society.

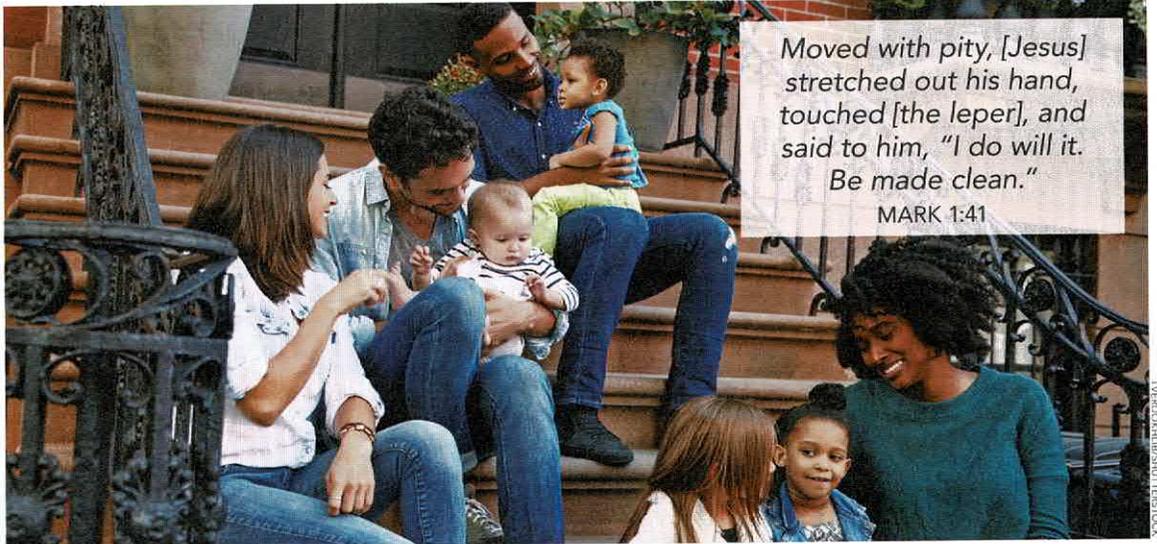
Unfortunately, out of fear or a sense of superiority,

some people ostracize or marginalize entire groups of people. This bias might be based on gender, race, culture, sexual preference—almost anything. In this way the benefits of society are denied to those who are marginalized. One characteristic of Jesus, obvious throughout the Gospel stories, is his all-inclusiveness. Jesus rejected no one. He was open to those who society ostracized. He interacted graciously with people with diseases, non-Jews, recognized public sinners, and those working with the Roman occupiers—all people considered ritually unclean. As his disciples, can we do less?

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR Reflection

- ✦ Which groups of people does society tend to ostracize or marginalize?
- ✦ What might be done to reverse this bias?



Moved with pity, [Jesus] stretched out his hand, touched [the leper], and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean."

MARK 1:41

Upcoming Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>OLPH</i>	<i>Saint Boniface</i>
<i>February 13 / 14 SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME</i>	8:30 am ~ Confession 9:00 am ~ Mass	5:00 pm ~ Mass
<i>Tuesday</i>	5:30 pm ~ Mass	
<i>Ash Wednesday</i>	7:00 pm ~ Mass	5:00 pm ~ Mass
<i>Thursday</i>	5:30 pm ~ Mass	
<i>Friday</i>	6:00 pm ~ Stations of the Cross	
<i>February 20 / 21 FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT</i>	8:30 am ~ Confession 9:00 am ~ Mass Stations of the Cross	5:00 pm ~ Mass

	<i>OLPH Mass 9:00 am</i>		<i>ST. BONIFACE Mass 5:00 pm</i>	
Date	February 14	February 21	February 13	February 13
Lector	Matthew Davis	Joe McNaughton	Jerry Nowak	Mary Jo Leygraaf

Mass Intentions	OLPH	St. Boniface
February 13 / 14	† Sister Sara	Intentions of Catholic Extensions
February 20 / 21	† Andrew Laschon	Intentions of Catholic Extensions

Our Gifts	OLPH	St. Boniface
February 13 / 14	\$75.00	\$50.00

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Cindy Garza & Becky York

February 14

China Rose

February 16



**The Rice Bowl Lenten Program begins on Ash Wednesday.
Please remember to pick up your rice bowls.**

Reading I

Lv 13:1-2, 44-46

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,
"If someone has on his skin a scab or pustule or blotch
which appears to be the sore of leprosy,
he shall be brought to Aaron, the priest,
or to one of the priests among his descendants.
If the man is leprous and unclean,
the priest shall declare him unclean
by reason of the sore on his head.

“The one who bears the sore of leprosy shall keep his garments rent and his head bare, and shall muffle his beard; he shall cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean!’ As long as the sore is on him he shall declare himself unclean, since he is in fact unclean. He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp.”

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 32:1-2, 5, 11

I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.

Blessed is he whose fault is taken away,
whose sin is covered.
Blessed the man to whom the LORD imputes not guilt,
in whose spirit there is no guile.

I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
my guilt I covered not.
I said, “I confess my faults to the LORD,”
and you took away the guilt of my sin.

I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you just;
exult, all you upright of heart.

I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.

Reading II

1 Cor 10:31—11:1

Brothers and sisters,
Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do everything for the glory of God.
Avoid giving offense, whether to the Jews or Greeks or
the church of God,
just as I try to please everyone in every way,
not seeking my own benefit but that of the many,
that they may be saved.
Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

Alleluia

Lk 7:16

Alleluia, alleluia.

A great prophet has arisen in our midst,
God has visited his people.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Mk 1:40-45

A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said,
“If you wish, you can make me clean.”

Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand,
touched him, and said to him,
“I do will it. Be made clean.”
The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean.
Then, warning him sternly, he dismissed him at once.

He said to him, “See that you tell no one anything,
but go, show yourself to the priest
and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed;
that will be proof for them.”

The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter.
He spread the report abroad
so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly.
He remained outside in deserted places,
and people kept coming to him from everywhere.

Gospel Reflection

In the Old Testament, leprosy is depicted as punishment for disobedience of God’s commands.

Considered “unclean”—unfit to worship or live with the Israelites, lepers are considered “stillborn,” the living dead. Indeed, the requirements imposed on lepers in today’s First Reading—rent garments, shaven head, covered beard—are signs of death, penance, and mourning.

There is more to the story in today’s Gospel than a miraculous healing! When Elisha, invoking God’s name, healed the leper, Naaman, it proved there was a prophet in Israel. Today’s healing reveals Jesus as far more than a great prophet—He is God visiting His people. Only God can cure leprosy and cleanse from sin, and only God has the power to bring about what He wills.

The Gospel scene has an almost sacramental quality about it - Jesus stretches out His hand—as God, by His outstretched arm, performed mighty deeds to save the Israelites. His ritual sign is accompanied by a divine word (“Be made clean”). And, like God’s word in creation (“Let there be”), Jesus’ word “does” what He commands.

The same thing happens when we show ourselves to the priest in the sacrament of penance. On our knees like the leper, we confess our sins to the Lord, as we sing in today’s Psalm. And through the outstretched arm and divine word spoken by His priest, the Lord takes away the guilt of our sin.

Like the leper we should rejoice in the Lord and spread the good news of His mercy. We should testify to our healing by living changed lives. As Paul says in today’s Epistle, we should do even the littlest things for the glory of God and that others may be saved.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray to end Abortion, Russell Brooks, Cassie & Clifton Centers, Maere Tekanene, Bill Moses, Jerry Roberts, Donna Blevins, Norma Wilson, Dennis Parks & Family, Erica Davis, Chris & Amanda Decker, Marian Colette, Debbie Moses Haggins, Rose Grant, Sandy Hurts, Dominic Cureton, Todd Morris, Alex Woods, Christopher Braden, Bonnie (Warfield) Bishop, Sister Alice, Curt and LeeAnn Hall, Jay Baird, Gary Hackler, Gail Willis, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Bisceglia, loved ones who are ill, Brody Beavers and family, Shawn Lee Day, all those of our families who are affected by Covid-19, and the Donner family.

Reminder: Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021 The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has published instructions on how ashes are to be distributed on ***Ash Wednesday***.

After blessing the ashes and sprinkling them with holy water in silence, the priest addresses those present, **reciting once** the formula found in the Roman Missal: "*Repent, and believe in the Gospel*" or "*Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return*".

At that point, the note continues, the priest "cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask, and distributes ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places." He then **sprinkles the ashes on each person's head** "without saying anything."

RULES FOR LENTEN FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

Traditionally, the 40 days of Lenten fast start with Ash Wednesday and include all the weekdays (but not the Sundays) of Lent.

Traditional Practice

Many Catholics observe the rules of Lenten fast and abstinence that were in effect when the Roman missal for the extraordinary form of the Mass was promulgated in 1962:

Laws of Days of Abstinence

Applies on one's 7th birthday.

Complete Abstinence: all Fridays of the year, Ash Wednesday, Holy Saturday, and the Vigil of Christmas.

Partial Abstinence: Abstinence (meat and soup or gravy made from meat permitted once a day at the principal meal): all the days of Lent, the Ember Days of Wednesday and Saturday, and the Vigils of Pentecost and the Assumption.

Abstinence from meat is dispensed on Holy Days of Obligation.

Laws of Fast

Applies for those aged 21 to 59, inclusive.

Days of Lent from Ash Wednesday inclusive, Ember Days, and Vigils of Christmas, Pentecost, and the Assumption.

One full meal permitted and two other meals may be taken which, when combined, are less than a full meal.

The Law of the Eucharistic Fast

The complete fast from all food and drink (except water or medicine) for three hours before the reception of Holy Communion. Those who are able to maintain the midnight fast, which was the previous discipline, are still encouraged to do so.

Current Practice

Under the new (1983) code of canon law:

Laws of Days of Abstinence

Begins on one's 14th birthday.

Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent.

Obliges abstention from flesh meat.

Laws of Days of Penance

Applies to all the Faithful.

Lent and Fridays outside of Lent.

Laws of Days of Fast

Applies to everyone aged 18 to 59, inclusive.

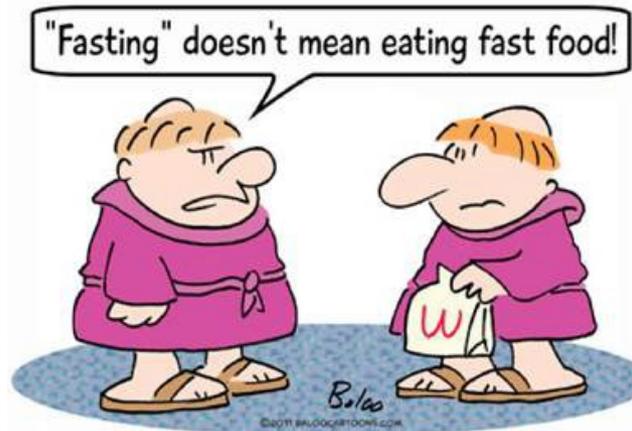
One full meal permitted and two other meals may be taken which, when combined, are less than a full meal.

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

The obligation to do penance is lifted on Fridays which are also celebrated as a solemnity.

The Law of the Eucharistic Fast

Under the New Code of Canon Law, the Fast for Holy Communion is one hour before the reception of the Holy Eucharist. Those who are able to maintain the previous discipline of the three-hour fast are still encouraged to do so.



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Dear Padre,

At Mass on holy days of obligation, there's a fair crowd. But on Ash Wednesday, not a holy day, the place is packed. Your explanation?

Indeed, pastoral experience corroborates your observation. Holy days of obligation draw well, but it's "standing room only" on Ash Wednesday. Although not a day of obligation, perhaps it's considered a "holy" day by most Catholics.

There's something elemental about the smudge of ashes on the forehead. People wear it without embarrassment or shame. No matter our walk of life or social status, we want that sooty cross. It's a badge of identification, graphically reminding Catholics that it's "spiritual gut-check" time. It jogs us from our routines, spurring us to the important reality of being who we are supposed to be—fully and totally Christian. It's as if we are saying, "I'm Catholic and proud of it. I may not be the best or greatest. I have faults and sins, but I'm not a bad person. I know deep down that being Christian is the way to live, and I'm going to try again."

Ash Wednesday signals the beginning of Lent, the Church's special time of confession and renewal in preparation for Easter. It is what Christians are all about—a people who have died with Christ in the waters of baptism in order to rise with him to a new life. We renew our baptismal commitment to be his people. As we celebrate Christ's passage through death to life, we renew our own death to old sinful ways to rise and live with recaptured vigor.

*From Dear Padre: Questions Catholics Ask © 2003 Liguori Publications
Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org*



THOMAS/SHUTTERSTOCK



A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

Contrary to the dispositions of the Law of Moses, which prohibited a leper from drawing near, Jesus extends his hand and even touches him....Jesus teaches us not to be afraid to touch the poor and the excluded, because he is in them. Touching the poor can cleanse us from hypocrisy.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, JUNE 22, 2016

Calendar

- Monday**
FEBRUARY 15
Weekday
Gn 4:1–15, 25
Mk 8:11–13
- Tuesday**
FEBRUARY 16
Weekday
Gn 6:5–8; 7:1–5, 10
Mk 8:14–21
- Wednesday**
FEBRUARY 17
Ash Wednesday
Jl 2:12–18
2 Cor 5:20—6:2
Mt 6:1–6, 16–18
- Thursday**
FEBRUARY 18
Thursday after
Ash Wednesday
Dt 30:15–20
Lk 9:22–25
- Friday**
FEBRUARY 19
Friday after
Ash Wednesday
Is 58:1–9a
Mt 9:14–15
- Saturday**
FEBRUARY 20
Saturday after
Ash Wednesday
Is 58:9b–14
Lk 5:27–32
- Sunday**
FEBRUARY 21
First Sunday of Lent
Gn 9:8–15
1 Pt 3:18–22
Mk 1:12–15