

6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Cycle B

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** Leviticus 13:1 – 2,44 – 46.

God is the healer of God's people.

**Psalm Response:** Psalm 32:1 – 2,5,11.

In times of trouble God fills us with the joy of salvation

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** 1 Corinthians 10:31 – 11:1.

Do all things for the greater honor and glory of God.

**Gospel:** Mark 1:40 – 45.

Jesus stretched out his hand, touched the Leper, and healed him.

God is good, all the time, All the Time, God is good

So let me begin by wishing all here either in person or virtually a very happy Valentine's Day a day. When we focus on the ones we love. The Church too celebrates this Day by naming it World Marriage Day, Marriage being the closest phenomenon we have to the Love that is shared by and between our Trinitarian God. As with any relationship it requires effort in order to be successful. So the question that is posed (actually everyday) is "what have you done to make your relationship stronger today?" It is also the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time and this year the last one before Lent begins. When we pick up Ordinary Time again it will be April 14 and the 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary time. Lent is our desert time, our time to reflect and pray about all the things our God has done for us and we express this through our fasting, alms giving and prayer.

In writing the daily updates this week I was reminded of one of Fr. Crenner's stories and our readings today reminded me of another. There was a prioress in a convent who received a letter from her parents on her birthday with a \$100 bill folded in it. As she looked up from the desk in her cell, she saw a desperate beggar out in front of the convent, and she felt really bad for him it being winter and all. So she took pity on him took a sticky note and wrote on it: "DON'T DESPAIR" and folded the bill into the sticky note and dropped it out her cell window, she lived on the second floor just above where the man was standing. The very next day she answered the doorbell at the convent and before her stood a very sharp and well dressed man who handed her a wad of \$100 bills. "What is this?" she said. He said, "Don't Despair paid 80 – 1."

Our first reading from Leviticus, a book written for the Levite tribe who were the priests for God's people. It was the book of rules all 636 of them. The intent of which was to keep the people safe and on track with God. In many ways it is similar to the *Baltimore Catechism*, which most of us older people were raised with. The *Catechism* was originally written for priests to use in the sacrament of Penance (now called Reconciliation) so he would have some assistance in dealing with the

penitent. It, however, became the tool of religious education. At any rate I digress. Hence in our Gospel Jesus send the man made clean to the priests for verification, because the priests' role was to keep the community safe from leaving God's ways. Paul is giving us our duty to do and say everything we do to the greater honor and glory of our God. This passage became the motto of the Jesuit order. It also helps us to stay humble and remember whose we are and what our goal is: to see the face of God.

Remember last week, Fr. Paul reminded us that we were still in the first chapter of Mark's Gospel. Well we are still there! Next week we are again but it is going back to before even the healing of Peter's mother in law, and it is the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent. The Gospel today I (s compelling! Picture this event! This man quarantined from the community because of a skin malady and not able to even approach any one for help. He has heard of this Jesus of Nazareth; and he believes with such faith that he breaks the rules and approaches him on his knees (I can just see the Apostles backing away). He says to Jesus, if you will it, you can make me clean. What does Jesus do? He stretches out his hand and touches the man (Also breaking the rules) and says, "I do will it!" You can actually see here where the Church developed the ritual for the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

What happens then is remarkable. Because of this man's faith he is made clean and welcomed back into the community (Jesus sent him to the priest) but Jesus is now unable to reenter the community for fear of being mobbed. So he now is outcast or quarantined. We all know how hard that is in this time of a pandemic that has staying apart out of love for our neighbor. I can't tell you how badly I wanted to give Joan Carey hug at the gravesite and yet restrained myself to a gloved fist bump.

So as we enter this Lent like no other in my lifetime, with just a sprinkling of ashes to point myself in the direction of repentance and wholeness as a Christ follower. Let us hope that our faith can call us all to bring light to the darkness of our world. May we be the kind of evangelists that the Leper was, he could not keep it a secret! God Loves you and cares for you, will you keep it a secret? Don't be like me and almost lose your life to find it. Let it shine! Be Blest!

God is Good, **all the time**. All the time, **God is good**.