

St. Mary's Catholic Church

6th Ordinary Sunday

February 14, 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

The disease of leprosy has pretty much been eradicated from our present day world. However, in biblical times, leprosy was considered one of the most dreaded diseases. In Old Testament times, the word leprosy meant literally a “striking down” or a “laying low” for any kind of skin disease which manifested itself in sores, skin blotches, or scabs. There are numerous references in the Scriptures that attest to people’s fears of leprosy; particularly the danger of contagion. Their fear is understandable in view of the fact that they had no scientific knowledge about the disease or any medicines or remedies for it. The only known safeguard was to quarantine the sickened individuals, helping to prevent further spread of the disease. Lepers were considered “**unclean outcasts**” and were often referred to as “**members of the living dead.**”

In biblical times leprosy was inherently fatal, terribly disfiguring, and totally debilitating. Leprosy irreparably ruined people’s lives and consigned them to a “living death” in all aspects of life. Physically, there was no known cure so all a leper could look forward to was pain, disfigurement, and death. Socially, families and friends shunned lepers, forcing them to live as **outcasts** on the outskirts of villages. Spiritually, since any illness was viewed as a punishment from God for sin, lepers were considered to be notorious sinners and they were not permitted to enter the synagogue for prayer and religious services. Psychologically, lepers could not expect any sympathy or compassion from others because people judged them as being responsible for their own afflictions and sufferings. Life as a leper was deplorable and lepers yearned to be free. Lepers were cast out of the community and doomed to live in deserted places. They were no longer considered to be a family member, they were unable to participate in any social events, and they were banned from worshipping God since they were considered to be “**unclean.**”

In today’s Scripture readings we hear about the terrible plight of those afflicted with leprosy. In our first reading from the book of Leviticus, we hear what the Jewish priests were to do when someone showed signs of leprosy. Priests were to examine the individual and if they discovered the person had the contagious skin disease, they were to declare the person “**unclean.**” Then the person with leprosy was forced to live apart from the rest of the community until a priest declared them ritually clean again. During their time of quarantine and isolation, the leper also had to warn others of their condition by wearing torn clothing, maintaining an unkempt appearance and shouting: “**Unclean, Unclean!**”

Continued...

Weekend Masses

Sat Feb 13	4:00 p.m	Jim Alt + Kathy Sehlhorst
Sun Feb 14	8:00 a.m.	Ethan Leiber
Sun Feb 14	10:00 a.m	Bill Koch
Sat Feb 20	4:00 p.m	Gene Badertscher
Sun Feb 21	8:00 a.m.	For our Parish
Sun Feb 21	10:00 a.m	Sue Schlumbohm

SUNDAY COLLECTION

Adults	\$3,510.00	Loose \$421.00
Total	\$3,931.00	
	50 envelopes returned = 25%	



*Thank you for your generosity!
Thank you also to those who give
electronically!!*

Assignments for February 20 & 21, 2021

Money Counters: Deb Goldenetz, Chad Wolford

4:00 p.m.

Cantor: Steve McCullough
Ushers: John Parinello and Bob Minto
Lector: Amy Tabler
E.M.: Jennifer Tschuor
Servers: Shylee and Ronald Kaufman

8:00 a.m.

Cantor: Steve McCullough
Ushers: *Volunteer*
Lector: *Volunteer*
E.M.: *Volunteer*
Server: *Volunteer*

10:00 a.m.

Cantor: Steve McCullough
Ushers: Greg and Gabe Denecker
Lectors: Chris Denecker
E.M.: Betty Gerten
Servers: Conner Gerten

Readings for February 21, 2021 1st Sunday of Lent

1st Reading: Genesis 9:8 –15

2nd Reading: 1 Peter 3:18 –22

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:12 – 15

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...In today's Gospel passage from St. Mark, a leper approaches Jesus seeking His help. The leper was way out of line since he had no business of leaving his place of quarantine and exile and going to Jesus. Rather than asking for help from Jesus, the leper should have been crying out: "**Unclean, unclean, stay away from me.**" In our Gospel passage the leper asks Jesus to go beyond simply declaring him clean again and begs Jesus to cure him of his illness. Moved with pity and compassion, Jesus moves closer to the leper, fearlessly touches him and miraculously heals him. By His caring word and gesture, Jesus healed the leper. According to the Mosaic Law, Jesus' gesture of touching the leper would render Him ritually impure. However, Jesus shows no concern about this law. Jesus then dismisses the cured leper with the admonition that he tells no one how he was cured. Instead, the leper should go to the priest to be examined and then he could be declared ritually clean again.

Today's Gospel challenges all of us to become more like Jesus. The question we are challenged to reflect upon is: How do we respond to someone who is considered to be an "**unclean outcast**" within our community? How do we respond to the needs of those persons who are cast aside, marginalized, or thrown away by our present society: the unborn, the elderly, the poor, the mentally ill, LGBTQ persons, persons with addictions and the incarcerated? Do we respond like most people; avoiding being involved and being "contaminated" by "**unclean**" persons, or do we (like Jesus) move **towards** them, reaching out with a caring touch and presence? Have a blessed week.

Love & prayers,
Fr. John

Ash Wednesday February 17, 2021: Distribution of Ashes in Time of Pandemic.

9 a.m. – Mass (live-streamed)
12 p.m. – Prayer Service
6:30 p.m. – Prayer Service for PREP classes
7 p.m. – Mass

This is a reminder that Ash Wednesday is **not** a Holy Day of Obligation so the receiving of ashes, while customary and laudable, is *not an obligation of the faithful*. Those who are high risk are advised to refrain from attendance out of concern for their own well-being. Because of the pandemic, after the homily, a general prayer will be said and then the ashes will be sprinkled on the crown (top) of each person's head instead of their forehead. Sprinkling ashes on the crown of the head is customary in many other places in our world. Thank you for understanding. Fr. John

The 9 a.m. Mass will be live-streamed and available all day.

Mass Live-Streaming We can now live-stream our



10 a.m. Sunday Mass! To watch our Sunday Mass online, please go to our YouTube page at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqK-4hQ9QbgP7sH4EhD9YA>

Abstinence and Fasting Ash

Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast. Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence. We are encouraged to "make space" for God in our minds and hearts by prayer and fasting. We make atonement for our sins and selfishness by giving alms more deliberately



Forgiven: The Transforming Power of Confession



is a three-week study that explores the grace and healing offered in Confession and shows

how this sacrament of mercy reveals the depth and bounty of God's love. By looking at God's revelation of his mercy in Scripture and making a step-by-step examination of the Rite itself, Forgiven communicates God's invitation to each one of us to come experience his indescribable love in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

<https://watch.formed.org/forgiven>

Session 1: Where are You? - February 20-21

Session 2: An Encounter with Mercy - March 6 - 7

Session 3: Embraced in Mercy: The Rite Explained - March 20 - 21

Also, check out "Forgiven - For Children: How to Make a Great Confession"

P.R.E.P

K-5: Class will meet Wednesday, February 17 from 6:30 - 7:30. There will be a Prayer Service for Ash Wednesday for the PREP students starting at 6:30. Students - if you are able, please arrive at 6:25 p.m. and meet in the church

6th Grade: Class will meet February 21 from 11 - 12:45

Jr High: Class will meet February 21 from 11 - 12:45



God Squad--High School Youth Group



God Squad High School Youth will meet February 21 from 11 - 12:45

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Virtual Catholic Conference There is a Men's Virtual Catholic Conference from February 19th – 21st. Registration is free! For more information and to sign up, please visit go.virtualcatholicconference.com/ncmc2021

There will also be a Women's Virtual Catholic Conference from March 12th – 14th. For more information, or to register for free, please visit go.virtualcatholicconference.com/mcwc2021