



Fr. Noel Danielewicz
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410-818-8149

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Embrace the Leper....

One of our most common human emotions is that of **FEAR!** Particularly, **fear of the unknown**, that can build walls or fences of separation and division along our borders, and in our neighborhoods. We create distance that keeps us from one another as sisters and brothers in the family of humankind.

Today's Gospel from Mark is a portrait of how societal reaction to illness hasn't changed a whole lot from the time of Jesus to our present life experience with the corona virus. Fear can be paralyzing and destructive, as we can become an extremist in our position to be totally nonchalant and callous, or revert to living remotely in isolation.

From the Book of Leviticus we read: "If someone has on his skin a scab or postule, 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." The priest was seen as the "**Board of Health**" back in the day. **The leper** was instructed to rent their garments and keep their head bare and cry out: "**Unclean! Unclean!** As they begged for food and sustenance.

As we take the necessary precautions to remain safe by wearing masks, social—distancing, getting vaccinated, washing our hands, we are doing our part to help control and end this terrible 21st scourge on humanity. Perhaps, the most difficult aspect of coping for many families is being separated from their loved ones and losing them to death. I think our common experience of the pandemic has brought us to a new sensitivity of **the plight of the "leper"** no matter what form of separation and isolation that is imposed.

Taking a closer look at Mark's Gospel, we realize that Jesus alone has the power to bridge the divide that sin, illness, divorce, loss of employment and fear have brought into our lives. Imagine, the courage that it took for the LEPER to cross over the societal mores by falling at the feet of Jesus. Petitioning the Lord, the leper begs—"**If you wish, you can make me clean!**" Jesus moved by pity, stretches out his hand, touched him and said—"**I do will it. Be made clean!**" Immediately, the leprosy left him and Jesus instructs him **to show himself to the priest** and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them.

Jesus did something more than healing the leper, **he touched him!** Lepers were seen as ritually unclean and because Jesus touched him, he too was seen as contagious and also banned from the community and

could never enter the Temple. Yes, Jesus breaks the Law! By touching the MAN with leprosy, he places himself in solidarity with the LEPER, who was judged to be a sinner, an outcast and is no longer aligned with the religious leaders of the synagogue.

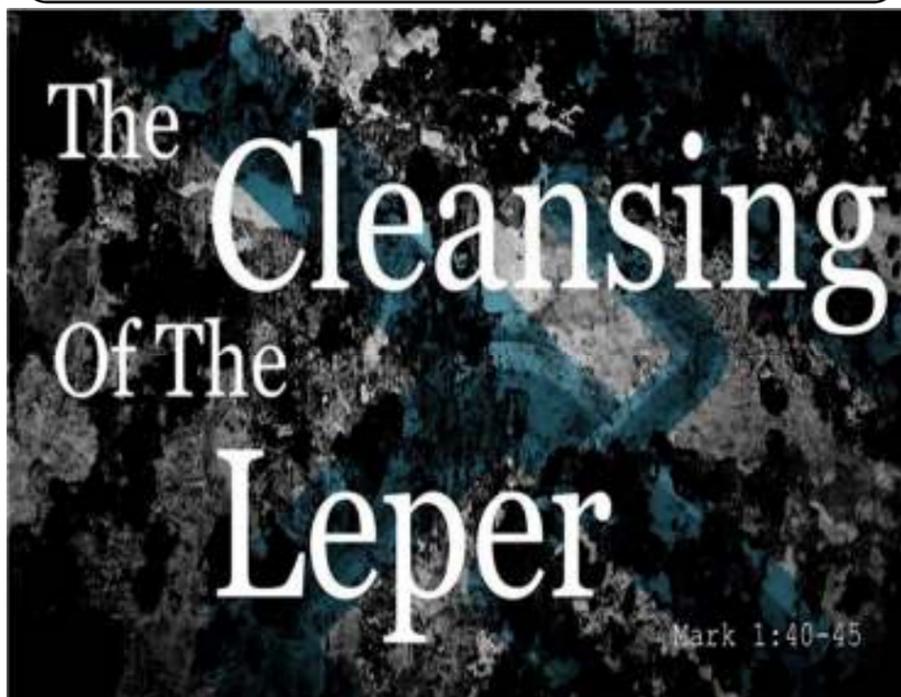
On the outskirts of the walled city of Assisi, there were communities of lepers who would beg for food and help. Francis, *when he was in sin* would become violently ill to the point of nausea whenever he encountered them. One day, rather than running away from the leper, Francis ran toward him and embraced him. This became for Francis **a moment of conversion** as he experienced the poor Christ in the leper he held.

Sisters and brothers, **name the lepers in your own life**, who have become left at the peripheries of your existence. Confront and encounter the face of Jesus in those whom you **despise, shun, isolate, and repel you**. For Francis and his early friars, their first ministry became the lepers, whom they cared for at a place called La Magdalena. As we gather before the Lord this morning, do you recognize the face of Christ in lepers of our day? The poor...the sick...the migrant...the addict, the victims with aids, covid-19, and victims of sex—trafficking?

Let me introduce **LAURA**, a former—student of our school, homeless, a bearer of AIDS and now a member of Mary's House/a Catholic—worker residence. It was a cold winter December evening as we gathered for First Friday Mass. Tonight we celebrated in Laura's Room, since she was too weak to join us in the living room. There were 30 folks gathered for prayer and supporting a sister on her way to God. A few days after Christmas, **Laura heard Jesus call her name** and she went home to the Lord! Laura died in her home at Mary's House on the second floor. However, when the funeral directors came for her body, fear of AIDS caused them to drag the body bag down the stairs....

Conversion lies when we can move from our fears, ignorance and isolation to a place of Gospel transformation where acceptance, welcome and inclusion embrace the person we are ...made in the image of GOD.... May Jesus at whose hands **lepers are made whole** and cured...life restored....eyesight recovered...devils put to flight...bread was multiplied. Help us discover our LEPER....our Laura and **see the face of God!** Amen! Hallelujah! Amen!

St. Benedict the Moor Church



Our Mission

St. Benedict the Moor is a Catholic Christian Community that celebrates its African-American heritage and welcomes cultural diversity. Join us at the Table of the Eucharist as sisters and brothers in the Lord. We are committed to grow and diversify the Church through the new evangelization, family, catechesis, young adult ministry and outreach to the poor. In the spirit of the prophet Joshua, we can say:

"As for me and my household; we will serve the Lord."

February 14, 2021

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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

St Benedict the Moor Parish

Sunday Mass: 10:30 am
Daily Masses: Mon.-Fri. 12:00 noon
Saturday: 8 am
Holy Days of Obligation:
Mass: 12 noon & 6:30 pm
(Exceptions will be posted)
Sacrament of Penance: Divine Mercy
Room Saturday 8:30-9:30am
or by Appointment

Emergencies:
call Fr.Noel: 410-818-8149
Office: 706- 323-8300

Communications
Address: St. Benedict the Moor
2935 9th Street
Columbus, Georgia 31906

Pastor

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410-818-8149

Staff

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Deborah Thompson

Director of Religious Education
Gail Buffong
706-536-8468

Director of Outreach
Beverly Casimier

Music Ministry
Mary Beth Kozee/Joe Saulsbury

Office Hours:
Pastor: Monday-Friday 10-11:30 am
1:00-3:00 pm

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Church

2930 Thomas Street
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Community Hall/Office
2935 9th St.
Columbus GA 31906



Flowers This Week

Altar Flowers were donated in memory of **James Moses** by Gladys, Trecia, Kecia and James, Jr.

Pastoral Concerns

Last week, we launched **PLEDGE SUNDAY** for ACA: Annual Catholic Appeal with a GOAL of \$16,550. Here are our results thus far:

14 FAMILY UNITS pledged **\$8, 530** and we have received **\$1, 930.**

May the Lord bless all those who made such a generous pledge and bless Dr. Gary Dawson for his witness talk and Mr. Richard Gibbs for his work and enthusiasm in serving as chairperson. Church, PLEDGE SUNDAY continues.....what's in your pledge card for this year's appeal 2021? Send all pledges to the Church Office as we tally our intake and we will send it to the Diocesan Office in Savannah.

The Season of Lent begins this week with Ash Wednesday. Please consult the attachment page with our Lenten Schedule for Masses, Stations of the Cross, copies of **the Word Among Us**, and your Rice Bowls and Church calendars.

Next Sunday: **Ms. Jordyn Dawson** will be our speaker for Black History Month. Calling forth all young adults to join us on Sunday, February 21st.

There has been a **change of date** for my impending surgery from February 8th to March 8th. It was done to accommodate receiving the COVID-19 Moderna Vaccine. Please keep me in your prayers.

This week our Church will be professionally **cleaned by SERVPRO** from rafters to carpets, lights to windows, pews to furniture.

We were blessed to meet and hear Friar Franck's Vocation journey to the Order of Franciscan Friars Conventual. Please keep him in your prayers during this time of discernment for Solemn Profession of Vows.



February 14th is World Marriage Day. Invest in your marriage by participating in an at-home retreat sponsored by the USCCB. Go to diosav.org/family-life/home to participate.

Mass Intentions

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 14, 2021 10:30 AM
St. Benedict the Moor Church—Family
For all Married Couples

Monday, February 15, 2021 12 Noon
+Don Messmer
+Clarence King

Tuesday, February 16, 2021 11 AM
+Dorothy Stewart
+Sally Grady

Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12 Noon
++Eric & Alicia Buffong
6:30 PM conversion of **Melissa MacLeod**

Thursday of Lent, February 18, 2021 11AM
Sister Romuald, cssf

Friday of Lent, February 19, 2021 12 Noon
+Joe Voytek

Saturday of Lent, February 20, 2021 8:00 AM
+Amy King
+Carlos King

Stewardship

Weekly Finance Report: February 7
Offertory: \$2345.00 (Online \$2125.00)
Utilities: \$275.00 (Online \$100.00)
Altar Flowers: \$100.00
Kitchen Reno: \$475.00
Church Repair: \$210.00 (Online \$25.00)
Poor Box: \$105.00

Special Collection

On Ash Wednesday we will take up the Collection for the **Church in Central and Eastern Europe**. This Collection supports the Church in more than 25 countries that still struggle to recover from former communist rule. Funds from this Collection support pastoral care, catechesis, building renovations, and seminary formation. Your support restores the Church and builds the future in this region. Please prayerfully consider how you can support the Collection next week. More information can be found at www.usccb.org/ccee.

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

READING 1 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

R. 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.

R. 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.

R. 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.

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

READING 2 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.

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.



In Our Prayers

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|------------------------|------------------------|
| Fr. Noel Danielewicz | Michael King |
| Sr. Agnes, fsma | Earl King |
| Sr. Apollonia, cssf. | Elvia King |
| Sr. Delores Anne, cssf | Lenny Korona |
| Helen Bell | Ida Ruth Lane |
| Amanda Cole | Mittie Lewis |
| Mik Cole | Delores McLeod |
| Robert Cole | Ruben Meinhofer & Fam. |
| Helena Danielewicz | Denvey Nelson |
| Ola Danielewicz | Major Nettles |
| Christine Dawson | Cordell Parker |
| Robert Dozier | Gwendolyn Parker |
| Carl English | Debra Pough |
| Stephanie Findlay | Evelyn Pough |
| Fluellen Family | Joe Ravalese |
| Yvonne Gilberti | Marcus Ransom |
| Elizabeth Grey | Sonsia Ranson |
| Ginnette Hughes | Lydia Sliva |
| Cecelia Hyams | Madeline Smith |
| Clarence Johnson | Emi Talbert |
| Donald Julien | Friar Steven Tremier |
| Paul Julien | Dorothy Washington |
| | Friar Carl Zdancewicz |