

Homily for Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

February 14, 2021

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Today's Gospel recounts the story of Jesus' interaction with a leper. In those day's lepers were unclean due to their disease. No one interacted with them, talked to them, especially did not touch them. But what does Jesus do?... Jesus listens to him... answers his prayers... and makes him clean... A social outcast.

Listen to the first few words again..."If you are willing, you can make me clean".

The leper gives us an example of the type of prayer request... that God listens too, and answers;

Listen to the Lepers words...and how he says them...

- His prayer was earnest and desperate – imploring him
- It was reverent – kneeling down to him
- It was humble and submissive – If you are willing
- It was believing – you can
- It acknowledged need – make me clean
- It was specific – not “bless me” but “make me clean”
- It was personal – Make me clean
- It was brief – 8 words

So what happened, how did Jesus respond, Jesus was moved with compassion. When we hear or read these words, don't we have a sense of exultation and gratitude.

Jesus stretched out His hand... think of this. The Hand of God stretched forth in answer to a humble, believing prayer. He touched him. Remember, the leper was considered unclean. Under the law, a person became ceremonial unclean when he touched a leper. Also, there was of course the danger of contracting the disease... but the Holy Son of Man, identified

Himself with the miseries of mankind, dispelling the ravages of sin without being tainted by them.

If Jesus did this for the leper, the unclean, the social out-cast, what will He do for us...

And in addition to that...what does God ask of us...this is answered in Matthew Chapter 25, verse 40. Jesus says...whatever you do for these the least of my brothers, you do for me...

What do we do for the least of His brothers...this week and last week we have that opportunity...the Bishops Appeal... A significant part of that goes to Catholic Charities...food kitchens; feeding the poor... Samaritan place...a place to stay.

A mobile medical clinic...healthcare for underserved areas.

We, here in this diocese have the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives, we can do the work of Jesus...and that is what He asks of us.

So, if you have not taken the time or thought about it, here is your chance.

I am convinced that God does have expectations of us...and if you listen to His words... He pretty-well spells it out. This is when Jesus, after his resurrection appears to Peter and he tells Peter

"Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep"...just like we talked about stewardship recently, and we said the word Steward means to manage or oversee.

Jesus is asking us to oversee, to manage and to tend to His flock.....tend my sheep...to feed His lambs and all those in need.

Very simply put...to those He blesses...He has expectations. Proverbs Chapter 22, verse 9 Tells us..."The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor".

God has blessed most of us...and He has a “plan” for us, we are called to imitate the healing and compassionate Jesus, and imitate His actions, He has expectations for all of us...the question is ...will we answer His call ?

May God Bless all of us.