

6th Sunday (B)

Medical advances in the past hundred years or so have made leprosy more or less obsolete. You rarely hear of a case, and even if it happens, it's easily cured. But, of course that was not the case in Ancient times. Leprosy was the scourge of the planet, slowly gnawing away at skin and limbs, defacing the body with a slow spreading infection, even the smell of which was putrefying and could not be tolerated. And even casual contact with an infected leper could transfer the disease to another. Hmmmm... Sounds a bit like something else that's been going around. Huh?

Anyway, as if the physical pain and torment wasn't enough, listen again to what a leper must do, how he must actively degrade himself.

The one who bears the sore of leprosy shall keep his garments rent and his head bare (these are signs of torment and poverty) He 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. Hmmmm..
Quarentine perhaps?

And the paranoia of epidemic ran so high, that almost any rash or scab was suspect and ejected you "OUTSIDE" the community until the Priest, declared otherwise

You know, today, we've medically eradicated leprosy.... But, there is still infectious putrid matter that makes us unclean.... And I'm NOT talking about CoVid.. But, the matter of... sin. It may not deface or mar our bodies like leprosy, but it gnaws away at our hearts and souls like a cancer.... And ... there is no such thing as 'personal sin'.

We're all members of the same body of Christ, so if we allow ourselves to persist in a state of sin.... We affect, in fact **infect**... the Whole.

But there is a cure for leprosy... Both kinds. What did the leper in the Gospel ask for? Not to be cured... but to be made clean.

And HOW is that done???

Listen again to the beautiful verses of psalm 32, which we just heard.

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.

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.

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice you just

Exalt, all you upright of heart.

I f that doesn't sound like the sacrament of reconciliation, I misunderstood my professors when I was studying Theology.

So, what do WE have to do? Unfortunately, there is no vaccination for sin.

So, We have to degrade ourselves, we have to muffle our beards, and cry out Unclean!! Unclean, Because in fact, in the state of sin.... We are unclean... But we too have the hope of the Gospel's leper.

We can come to Jesus, kneeling down and begging him... We too can move him to pity and plea, "If you wish you can make me clean!"

Jesus wills us to BE MADE CLEAN.

This Lent... Make a good Confession.

Let us allow Jesus to TOUCH US!