



parish newsletter

Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time (Year B) | 14 February 2021

Reflecting on the Gospel



we would rather keep those we consider unclean, different or unfixable in a place by themselves. It is hard to see them with us, but they deserve to be. There is far too much violence in this world and the result of that violence is the assault on human life. Many are forced to leave the place they call home in search of safer ground, finding few if any along the way who will help them. How different today's Gospel story would be if Jesus gave in to what was politically correct at that time. The leper would have been turned away and a soul, already beaten down by disease and fear, would have experienced an even deeper wound. Jesus wouldn't have captured much attention from anyone, nor would he have mirrored the Father's compassion and love.

Where do we stand with all of this? Do we at least understand that God's vision is often in conflict with the vision put forth in our world and even the one we advance ourselves? There is no doubt that it is

incredibly challenging to find a place for everyone at the table. This challenge is compounded when the systems of operation and structure that are so ingrained in us affirm power and privilege rather than inclusivity and justice. Everything really goes askew when the powerful begin to control who is entitled to wholeness and inclusion, and greed becomes a driving force. Prejudice and entitlement raise their ugly heads and we find ourselves with quite a mess. It's time to admit that things have been a mess for a very long time. The mess needs to be healed, not by erasing it but by allowing God to touch it and make it whole. We need to bring God back to the centre of life where God belongs. There are no easy solutions to the world's dilemmas. But, knowing that wholeness, healing, and dignity are worthy pursuits, we can more confidently labour to achieve God's vision.

The Church, as a voice of the Gospel, proclaims the sacredness of all human life. Everyone created by God is fashioned in God's image and has Divine DNA at the centre of their soul. God never leaves what God creates but always re-

mains intimately bound to what he has given form. Everyone has a place and because they have received the gift of Divine Blessing, nobody deserves to feel inferior, unworthy, unwanted, unclean or marginalised. Even the

most broken of souls has a place. We, the Body of Christ, have the privilege and responsibility to give voice to the voiceless. The cries of the little one in his or her mother's womb are just as sacred as the cries of one who is homeless

and hungry. The migrant deserves our attention as much as the forgotten elderly and even the prisoner, with a heart hardened by anger and resentment, deserves respect and dignity. The Gospel of Life is often hard to swallow, and

Everyday Stewardship



Tracey Earl Welliver, MTS

I have always wondered why Jesus told the cleansed leper not to publicise how he had been healed by the Son of God. It's not that I can't understand why Jesus would want to keep the matter quiet — after all, he knew that as soon as people heard, he would be mobbed with requests for healing, and his movements restricted.

What gets me is the fact that Jesus simply must have realised the leper would not listen to him. Why give someone a command you know they will ignore? It's a complicated question, and when I reflect on it, I can't help but connect it to another equally complicated question: why does God, all-good and all-knowing, al-

low bad things to happen?

Yes, God is all-good and all-knowing. So when He gives us free will, He knows what we will do with it. However, He is also all-powerful. He can and will bring good from any situation, any tragedy, or even any instance where someone ignores Him.

Was it a sin for this leper to do other than what Jesus had said? That's a heavy question for a Sunday morning! But it's plain to see that, even though this man ignored Jesus' command, God still used his actions. How many were brought to Christ because of the news spread by this leper!

As someone trying to live out a stewardship way of life, what is God requesting of you right now?

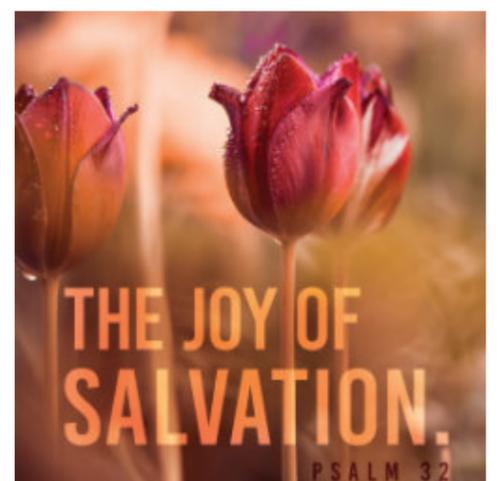
*Jesus said to the man,
'Of course I want to
heal you ... Be
cured!'*

Live the Liturgy

Inspiration for the Week

Everybody has a place at the table, and nobody deserves to feel inferior, unworthy, unwanted, or marginalised. It is not part of God's vision. Jesus came to heal, make things whole, set things right, and restore relationships. No one is to feel unwelcome or alienated from the community. Whether we like it or not, this message is at the core of the Gospel. It makes a lot of sense when you think about it. Perhaps this is why people kept coming from everywhere to listen to Jesus speak and to be in his presence. He

made perfect sense. Most of us have no issue buying into this vision. We run into trouble, however, when we fall into the trap of privilege and power. We diverge from God's vision when the powerful begin to control who is entitled to wholeness and inclusion, and greed becomes a driving force. Prejudice and entitlement have no place in the kingdom of God, and even the most needy and hurting among us are worthy of the compassion Jesus desires to offer. There are no easy solutions to the world's dilemmas. But one thing is for certain, no one can be singled out, excluded or mistreated. Everyone matters.



First Reading	Psalm	Second Reading	Gospel Acclamation	Gospel
He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp. (Lv 13:46)	You are my refuge, O Lord, you fill me with the joy of salvation. (Ps 31)	Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. (1 Cor 10:31)	Alleluia, alleluia! May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we can see what hope his call holds for us. Alleluia!	The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean. (Mk 1:42)

Masses this Week

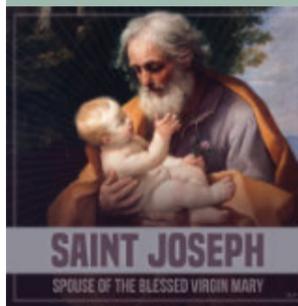
14	SIXTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME	Lv 13:1-2, 44-46/Ps 32:1-2, 5, 11 [7]/1 Cor 10:31—11:1/Mk 1:40-45 10.30 Mass St Mary's Romek Iwaszko 17.00 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Terry & Maureen Canavan
15	Monday	Gn 4:1-15, 25/Ps 50:1 and 8, 16bc-17, 20-21 [14a]/Mk 8:11-13 12.05 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Teresa O'Leary
16	Tuesday	Gn 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10/Ps 29:1a and 2, 3ac-4, 3b and 9c-10 [11b]/Mk 8:14-21 12.05 Mass St Mary's Friends of Sunderland Seafarers (Living and deceased)
17	ASH WEDNESDAY	THE SEASON OF LENT Jl 2:12-18/Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 12-13, 14 and 17 [cf. 3a]/2 Cor 5:20—6:2/Mt 6:1-6, 16-18 12.05 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Tommy & Annette Conroy 19.00 Mass St Cecilia's People of the Parish
18	Thursday	Dt 30:15-20/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6 [Ps 40:5a]/Lk 9:22-25 12.05 Mass St Mary's Sheila Ward (RIP)
19	Friday	Is 58:1-9a/Ps 51:3-4, 5-6ab, 18-19 [19b]/Mt 9:14-15 12.05 Mass St Mary's George Smith (RIP)
20	Saturday	Is 58:9b-14/Ps 86:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 [11ab]/Lk 5:27-32 11.00 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Joan, Ann & Tommy 18:00 Vigil Mass St Cecilia's Louise Wilson (RIP)
21	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT	Gn 9:8-15/Ps 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9 [cf. 10]/1 Pt 3:18-22/Mk 1:12-15 10.30 Mass St Mary's Kitty & Harry Garraghan (RIP) 17.00 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Liz Rodwell

Parish Prayer for the Year of Saint Joseph

Almighty God, you have chosen Saint Joseph to be the mainstay of Jesus and Mary, the wise and faithful servant in whom they could trust.

We pray that he may be the guardian of our Parish and our families; that he may inspire with confidence those who seek his protection; that he may give security to those who work in the vineyard of your Son; and finally, that he may be a source of strength to us, who wish like him, to dedicate ourselves ever more fully to Christ's service, now and in times to come.

Amen.

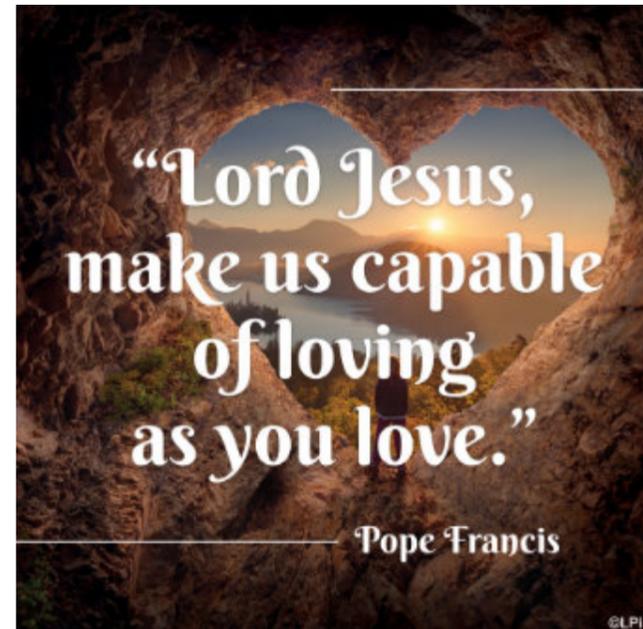


Questions for the Week

First Reading: Ancient Israel isolated those with leprosy fearing the disease would spread to others. In what way can this be seen as a form of compassion?

Second Reading: Paul places a high value on avoiding unnecessary conflict. Why do you think this is an important virtue for a Christian?

Gospel: The man healed of leprosy disobeyed Jesus' command not to share with others what had happened. Why do you think the man did so?



Why do we do that?

Catholic life Explained



Question: In today's digital world, do we really need to be face-to-face with a priest to confess our sins? Would Facetime or Zoom ever be allowed?

Answer: The question of whether or not Catholics

can celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation virtually (via social media, by phone, or in some other way) is a question that has actually been around for several years. The recent COVID-19 pandemic brought the question back in a new way, especially as many parishes were forced to introduce a sort of "social distanced" confession, with the sacrament being celebrated outdoors.

In reflecting on this question, however, there are a couple points that we want to keep in mind. First, as the Code of Canon Law observes in different places, the faithful have a right to the sacraments of the Church and the Church's ministers have a responsibility to make them accessible. At the same time, however, we always have to be sure that we respect the nature of the sacraments themselves.

Although modern forms of technology and communication can help us in our work of evangelization catechesis, the Pontifical Council for Social Communication has reminded us that, "Virtual reality is no substitute for the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the sacramental reality of the other sacraments, and shared worship in a flesh and blood human community. There are no sacraments on the internet" (The Church and the Internet, no. 9).

Although our encounters with others on the internet and via social media can be considered "real" in one sense, in the sacraments we encounter Christ in a personal and ecclesial way. It is never just a private experience but is always grounded in the life of the Church and this means that it must truly be personal, including the contact between the confessor and the penitent. While the convenience or ease of online celebrations might be appealing for many reasons, at heart, we always want to keep in mind the fullness of the Church's tradition and the meaning of the sacraments.

News & Announcements

Lent 2021

Wednesday marks the start of our annual Lenten fast in preparation for Easter: please note the times of Mass. In addition, Mass at St Hilda's is at 10am and St Benet's at 7pm.

Join us online every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday for the Rosary, Adoration and Stations of the Cross. See our parish website for details.

CAFOD

St. Aidan's and St. Anthony's Schools are taking part in CAFOD's 'Walk for Water' campaign this Lent, helping communities that don't have access to clean water. Everyone is invited to take part, and there are two ways you can do this: 1) by walking 10,000 steps a day. You could do it by yourself as your daily exercise or you could do it with members of your family or bubble. The Sisters of Mercy are taking part alongside us and we will be sharing videos of their effort on Twitter. Follow

@StAnthonysRE to see them!

There is a Just Giving page where you can make a donation: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/walk-for-water1539>

2) Either print and cut out a water droplet from CAFOD's website, or design your own! Put your water droplet in a window that can be seen from outside your building. When you go out for a walk in the area, look out for other people displaying the CAFOD water droplet.

Family Fast Day is 26 February. See posters at the back of church for more details.

Thank-you so much for your generosity!

Wear Walking in the Light of God

Download our prayer walk from our parish website or on our Facebook page. We also have some printed copies available at the back of church and invite God for a walk with you from the sculpture of the sun to Roker beach stopping for prayer at each of the planet markers.

Flock Notes

Sometimes I feel that Lent 2020 hasn't finished yet and here we are starting Lent 2021!

The world and the seasons continue on their unstoppable march, despite everything that has happened to us since last Lent. I take comfort in that.

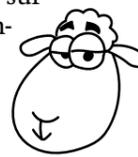
As unstoppable as the changing of the seasons and the passing of time are, so is God's will. I'm not the centre of the universe and the world does not revolve around me and my needs. That's really good news!

The annual observance of Lent is a reminder that everything unfolds according to God's plan. I rarely understand that plan and I often disagree with it, but as we pray and surrender every day: 'thy will be done'.

Lent reminds us that God works to bring good out of everything, including our sin. The ultimate example of that is the death of his Son on the cross; however, God also demonstrates it in our own lives each and every day. As much as he desired to heal the leper in today's gospel so he desires to heal us of the disease of sin. And that desire is as

unstoppable as the changing of the seasons.

I often think that the first and most important task of the Christian life is to get out of God's way and allow God to be God in our lives. For the next 40 days the invitation is to get out of the way and allow God to work his healing in our lives, to stop resisting the unstoppable force of his love and to surrender ourselves completely to his will.



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