



Let us be still and ask the Holy Spirit to be with us

Dear Father,
Be with us as we pray.
Open our ears to hear your Word in the Gospel.
Unite us in faith, hope and love as we pray together.
Send your Holy Spirit to inspire and sustain us in our mission.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Gospel

Mk 1: 40-45

A leper came to Jesus and pleaded on his knees: 'If you want to' he said 'you can cure me.' Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. 'Of course I want to!' he said. 'Be cured!' And the leprosy left him at once and he was cured. Jesus immediately sent him away and sternly ordered him, 'Mind you say nothing to anyone, but go and show yourself to the priest, and make the offering for your healing prescribed by Moses as evidence of your recovery.' The man went away, but then started talking about it freely and telling the story everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, but had to stay outside in places where nobody lived. Even so, people from all around would come to him.

What words or phrases struck you in Sunday's Gospel reading? What might God be saying to you in and through the Gospel?

Reflection

We can imagine this encounter on the outskirts of a Galilean town. This leper has had to leave his family and live together with other sufferers 'outside in places where nobody lived'. He is 'unclean'. Jesus tentatively stretches out his hand, lest the leper back away, and cures him with a healing touch.

Despite Jesus' orders, the cured man tells everyone that Jesus healed him with a touch! Having touched the leper, Jesus himself was rendered unclean. The man unintentionally, but effectively, proclaims, Jesus is unclean. Today we might say Jesus was a 'close contact' and so subject to 'quarantine' away from everyone else. He can no longer go openly into any town and has to stay outside in places where nobody lived... except other lepers.

Jesus' response to the leper's declaration is 'Of course I want to!' What Jesus does is not because it is in his role statement, expected by others or to win their favour. It is a response of the heart, the only time in Mark's Gospel where Jesus heals out of pity. The heart of a leader with the heart of Jesus is inevitably drawn to 'unclean' people forced to the margins. You know they're leaders because others have followed. (*Greg Wilson, CSYMA Board Member*)

Lord Jesus

You can heal us if you want to.
Heal us of the fear of reaching out
to those on the margins.
Forgive us for not coming to you
for not recognising you in the poor and suffering
Open our hearts to serve in solidarity
Lord hear our prayer
Amen