

# SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## LECTONARY #77

READING I Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46

A reading from the Book of Leviticus

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."

Leviticus = lth-vlt-ih-kuhs

leprosy = LEP-ruh-see

Don't overemphasize the description of the illnesses.

leprous = LEP-ruh-s

Those who are diseased are ostracized and must publicly declare it. Having to live apart from the community compounds this sense of separation. Have you ever felt cut off from your community?

### READING I

In today's reading from Leviticus, the prescriptions regarding dealing with skin disorders are listed in detail. Such ailments were not trivial matters to the ancient Israelites. Those suspected of chronic skin disease were required to appear before the priest, who would declare a person clean or unclean. If the disease was of a temporary nature, then the afflicted person was deemed clean, but if the priest found that it was a chronic skin disease, then the person was deemed unclean and was treated like a corpse. The reason for this was that bodily

impurity was associated with the forces of death, as opposed to God's covenantal commandments, which represented the forces of life.

Since contact between the sacred and the unclean was avoided at all costs, permanent banishment was a very real possibility for those suffering chronic skin disorders. In such cases, the afflicted person had to tear his garments, a sign of mourning, and announce his proximity to all so that others could avoid coming near him. Chronic skin disease was a significant social and religious barrier between the

deemed unclean and was treated like a corpse. The reason for this was that bodily

### READING II

In this reading from 1 Corinthians, Paul exhorts believers to do everything for the glory of God, including not giving offense to others. Paul specifically refers to eating and drinking in this context because the Corinthians were struggling with whether they could

ease and to perform the prescribed rituals the person had been cured from the disease and to perform the prescribed rituals described in Leviticus 14:1-20.

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11 (7)

**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.  
 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you just;  
 exult, all you upright of heart.

Corinthians = kohr-IN-thee-uhnz

**READING II 1 Corinthians 10:31—11:1**  
**A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians**

**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.**

Sensitivity to other cultures is a timeless message of tolerance and inclusivity.  
 Are we confident enough in our faith to invite others to follow our Christlike living?

purchase and eat food that had been offered to idols. Paul's command to "Avoid giving offense" does not mean to avoid hurting others' feelings. Instead, to "give offense" meant either to impede someone's acceptance of the Gospel or to estrange a believer. As we heard in the second reading last Sunday, Paul again states that he tries to please everyone. Paul means by this that he is careful in preaching and in living out his Christian vocation so that nothing he does turns others away from the Gospel. Instead, Paul is like transparent glass through which the Gospel is seen. Paul imi-

tates Christ so that all that the people see is Christ and not Paul. Paul encourages believers to emulate his imitation of Christ so only Christ is seen in them.  
 Earlier in this letter, Paul states that Christ died for weak members of the community (8:11). As imitators of Christ, we should die to ourselves for the sake of others for their salvation. This does not mean being dictated to by others' conscience, but rather that it takes careful discernment and prayer to distinguish our own preferences, habits, and opinions

**GOSPEL**

As seen in today's first reading, chronic skin disease resulted in the afflicted person's marginalization from the rest of the community. While these chronic disorders were seen as punishment for sin, it was also clear that the cure of such diseases was a divine prerogative, like raising the dead (Numbers 12:10-12; 2 Kings 5:7).

Jesus demonstrates that he has this divine prerogative in his healing of the

GOSPEL Mark 1:40-45

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

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.

The leper bravely approaches Jesus. Think of a time that you knelt in prayer and begged God for healing. Bring the intensity of that prayer to the reading.

Read Jesus' actions and performative words slowly and tenderly. Jesus is answering the man's deepest prayer for healing.

Jesus repeats this request for secrecy throughout the gospel of Mark. Here, and in other places, it is ignored.

leper. Not only does he go against Levitical purity laws by touching the leper, he cures him through the power of his word and touch. Here Jesus combines in one healing event both word and deed, each method having been demonstrated separately in the Gospel readings. After the healing, Jesus follows Levitical legislation, telling the former leper to show himself to the priest and offer sacrifice as prescribed by the religious law.

As in today's second reading, there is a concern for following the letter of the

to all. M.B.

law. However, the overriding concern here is reintegrating the marginalized into the community that they, too, might be saved. By the end of this reading, the healed man is not only restored in health and in society, he also participates in Jesus' ministry by proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ