

## **28<sup>th</sup> Sun C**

### **Introduction...**

We are still in Ordinary Time in the Prayer Life of the Church... This is the 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time. Since Ordinary Time began after the Easter Season, the Gospels have given us many stories about Jesus... his teaching, his values, his healing activities. If we look at Jesus we see the human face of God, a God who loves us and wants us to flourish, despite the sinfulness, the woundedness, the Powers of Death – all the Bad News in our world. Today's Gospel is no exception... Let's take a closer look at it, and ask what it tells us about our lives today as 21<sup>st</sup> century Catholics. But first, a Refrain...

**Refrain... If today you hear God's voice, harden not your hearts**

### **I The Lepers**

Let's take a look at the "lepers" in today's Gospel.

First, they had skin diseases and not necessarily leprosy...

but whatever skin disease they had, it affected their appearance, and the people of Jesus' time considered them as being punished by God, and would shun them... they were marginalized.

They could not go to the market to buy food.

They could not go to the Synagogue to gather with their fellow Jews on the Sabbath.

They certainly could not go to the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the Holy Days... for they were unclean.

Further, when passing travelers on a road they had to go to the side of the road, away from the travelers.

They wore distinctive clothing which covered their entire body, lest others see their disfigurement.

They had to warn people that they were "the unclean."

Who are the lepers in our society today?

Who are the marginalized, the warehoused, the forgotten?

Mother Theresa of Calcutta said that poverty in the developed countries of the world consisted of those unloved, uncared for, unnoticed.

Notice in today's Gospel that Jesus approaches the lepers, who stand at a distance from him crying out "Jesus! Master! Have pity on us."

Jesus' heart was filled with compassion as he looked at them. Jesus was God's mercy walking among us.

Jesus he said, "*Go, show yourselves to the priests.*"

That was a very risky command...

they didn't "show themselves" to anyone, for they were disfigured.

They covered themselves and kept themselves from public view... but they headed off to see the priests.

Then the Gospel says,

*As they were going they were cleansed... And one of them realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him.*

Strange... it seems that the lepers were not healed right away, but only as "they were going on their way."

And it seems that most of them didn't realize right away that they had been cleansed.

Only one of them did.

One of them realized he had been healed, touched by God's servant Jesus, cleansed of his disease.

Now he could reenter society...

now he could become a part of the people again...

join his family again,

go to the market to buy food,

attend the Synagogue on Sabbath to worship with the people,

and especially go to the Temple to celebrate the Holy Days.

This one praised God, and came back and thanked Jesus, God's healing servant.

Why wouldn't all of them realize they had been cleansed?

Why didn't all of them return and thank Jesus?

How grateful are we for God's blessings to us?

Did you thank God for your blessings this day?

What are your blessings?

How much we take for granted.

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## **II A Story about Gratitude**

### **Girl in wheelchair – Gratitude**

*I read this story awhile ago and it touched my soul, and I want to share it with you today.*

*A few months ago, a young, beautiful, healthy college student, suddenly and without warning, lost control of her body and was paralyzed from the neck down. Her friends sent prayer requests to everyone they knew. A few months later, the girl recovered.*

*When she returned to school, her friends noticed that her smile was brighter than before; it was almost as if she had seen Heaven. There was a visible change of attitude; she was kinder, happier, and paid attention to people more than ever. She started sending emails to her friends and family expressing her love and gratitude for all they have done for her. She sent emails to her parents, thanking them for all the sacrifices they made for her since she was born. Although everyone loved the change in her, they had to ask her what caused this change in her. She explained that when she had been immobile in the hospital and thought she would never walk again or would maybe even die, that the most painful thing was the regret she was feeling that she had not lived her life fully. Now that it seemed to be too late, it all seemed so clear that she had not loved enough, used all opportunities to serve. She suddenly knew that all the grudges she held, and all the time lost thinking about those who had wronged her and how to avoid those she didn't like, had been a waste of her precious life. She thought about how much time she spent being mad and miserable for all that went wrong, and how little time she spent rejoicing for what went right! In her remorse, she begged God in prayer to give her a chance to live again so that she could make things right, and God heard her prayers.*

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This young woman realized that all of these bindings and wrappings of resentment and anger and negativity which smothered her heart and blanketed her thoughts, and bound her emotions, held her in bondage to negativity and sadness and maybe even some depression.

All of this soul sickness kept her blind to God's blessings which surrounded her.

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### **III What About You?**

What holds you in bondage... what is your leprosy?

Can you take it to Jesus this morning and ask,

Lord, heal me.

Do you realize that you can begin to shed its trappings and its wrappings?

If it's anger and resentments... share them with someone... maybe a friend with common sense, or even a counselor...

Ask God's help.

If your bondage is to any of the other "deadly sins" – do the same.

What are the 'deadly sins' which afflict so many of us?

Envy or jealousy,

Lust,

Pride,

Sloth or laziness,

Greed,

Gluttony.

Realize that God doesn't want us in bondage to these afflictions.

God wants us to flourish.

God loves us and will never love us less, no matter what we do.

God wants to heal us and deliver us.

Isn't that what Jesus did in his life?

We don't earn God's love... it's the very nature of God... love.

Only fear, doubt, self centeredness or self-hatred can blind us to this love of God for us.

We need to believe in this love, receive it, trust it, allow it, accept it and even enjoy it.

### **Conclusion**

Let us pray,

*Jesus, hear our prayer today.*

*Release us from any of the "deadly sins" that disfigure us,*

*cause us shame,*

*or hold us in bondage.*

*Help us to flourish Lord,*

*To know that we are your son or daughter,*

*And that you love us,*

*We are precious in your sight.*

*Bless us this day Lord,*

*So that we might come to you in this Mass,*

*Praising our heavenly Father,*

*And thanking you for your love and healing in our lives.*

*Enter our hearts at communion time and free us from our bondage.*

*Amen.*

**Refrain... To You Yahweh I lift up my soul,  
Of my God.**