

COLORFUL SCRIPTURE

February 11, 2024

Jesus Heals Through Touch

Based on Lv 13:1-2, 44-46; 1 Cor 10:31—11:1; Mk 1:40-45

By Marianne Couture

In this Sunday's Gospel, a leper comes to Jesus, kneels before him and begs for help.

At the time Jesus lived, leprosy was widespread and highly contagious. This bacterial skin infection caused serious facial deformities and rotting of limbs and fingers. Those suffering from it gave off a terrible odor. Even worse, this disease was thought to be God's punishment for the sin or sins the person committed.

The lepers were forced by law to leave their families and live in separate "colonies" away from healthy relatives and townspeople. The living conditions were poor and filthy. The lepers felt lonely and unhappy because people were frightened by the way they looked and were afraid of infection. People would even throw stones at them if they came too close to town.

Jesus doesn't judge the leper by the way he looks; he doesn't turn away from the man. When the leper asks him for help, Jesus is "moved with pity." Jesus reaches out to him, touches him, and heals him.

Instantly, the leprosy disappears, his skin is clean, and the leper is completely healed. Jesus tells him not to publicize the healing and, according to Mosaic Law, to go to the priest who will perform the special rite verifying the man is cured of leprosy and can re-enter society and participate in temple worship.

Forgetting what Jesus told him about not telling anyone, and happy and excited about his healing, the leper goes about the countryside telling everyone. Because of this, it was difficult "for Jesus to enter a town openly." Now, "people kept coming to him from everywhere" for more miracles.

Jesus teaches us to love, to be kind and compassionate to everyone, especially those whom others avoid because of poverty, illness, disability, deformity or because they may be different from us.

Lord Jesus, you show your love to everyone; teach us and help us to love as you love.

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