



Some reflections inspired by online copyrighted commentaries and homilies

February 14, 2021 Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Every day in life we are called to make choices. We hope to choose right, to make the best choice possible, the choice that the Lord would want us to make. But as we know, we don't always succeed in choosing well; sometimes, we make choices the Lord would not have wanted us to make. In this weekend's gospel reading, a leper comes up to Jesus and says, 'If you want to – if you choose – you can cure me'. The leper could not presume that Jesus would choose to heal him, because lepers were not supposed to approach others; they were to keep out of the way, for fear they would contaminate others. However, in reply, Jesus said to him, 'Of course I want to! Be cured'.

Jesus chose to do what nobody else would have chosen to do; he reached out and touched the leper and, as a result, his leprosy was healed. In the gospels, Jesus is consistently portrayed as choosing to make contact with those who are broken in body, mind or spirit, and who are not part of the mainstream of society. He chooses the marginalized and despised to heal. These folks, unlike the socialites are not, 'full of themselves' and open to the Lord's healing touch. When we are burdened with the throes of life, and nobody seems to care, we know we can come to Jesus.

As the song says, *"Shackled by heavy burden, Neath a load of guilt and shame, then the hand of Jesus touched me and now I'm no longer the same."*

He touched, Oh, He touched me, and oh, the joy that floods my soul. Something happened and now I know He touched me and made me whole."...

If the Leper was with us today he probably would be singing this day in and day out, in thanksgiving. Our risen Lord continues to make those same choices today; he chooses to touch each of us in our own brokenness, in our sinfulness, under our own burdens. He will always be a healing and life-giving presence in our lives, all we have to do is approach Him. However, the exchange Jesus expects in return is for us to be the same for each other, to make the kinds of choices that bring healing and new life to others we meet on life's journey.

Jesus wants to touch all of our lives, because he wants to bring healing grace to us all. Nothing we do or fail to do, no circumstance in which we find ourselves, places us beyond his reach. As St. Paul says in his letter to the Romans, 'nothing can come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus'. The Lord touches our lives, where we are, as we are, what and who we are. All we need is the courage of the leper and take the initiative to approach Jesus in our humility. Jesus' response to the leper shows that no one is outside the reach of the Lord. Jesus is not in the business of excluding people, regardless of how they are judged by others, "All are Welcome..." The Lord's compassion knows no limits; it cannot be confined by religious Law. Today's message is both a reassuring message for us when we feel excluded and a challenging word when we are tempted to exclude others, when we frown upon those who are not like us.