

6th Ordinary Sunday
February 14, 2021
“Compassion”

Lev 13:1-2, 44-46
1 Cor 10: 31-11:1
Mk 1:40-45

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Certainly, all of the restrictions because of the Corona Virus are getting people down. Almost everything is limited, restricted, or prohibited. We must practice social distancing, wear masks, and not show ordinary signs of physical affection. We are cut off – or shut out – from most of what we, formerly, were able to do. Furthermore, if exposed, we must quarantine ourselves for two weeks. Perhaps, the worst off practically, are those who live alone, are sick, have no one to assist them, but require no hospitalization!

3500 years ago, the Chosen People faced similar restrictions if they were infected in any way. The Book of Leviticus tells us that any skin infection or disease required quarantine and isolation. Furthermore, if afflicted, they had to wear masks. If their condition persisted, they became social outcasts – They had to struggle to survive and had to forage for food. Worst of all, was that others absolutely shunned them, and many considered them to be cursed by God!

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus taught by his behavior how we should treat those who suffer in their distancing or with any isolating affliction. Jesus shows compassion. He does not consider the leper as accursed by God. Instead, he sees the poor man as one of God’s suffering children. Moreover, Jesus does an extraordinary thing. He reaches out and actually touches the diseased and contagious man. And the man is instantly healed. Then Jesus tells him to go to the priest for a formal declaration of health – and to make an offering in thanksgiving for his restoration to health.

Today, there are many healthcare workers who are imitating Jesus as they care for those hospitalized because of the Corona Virus. Most are not doing the work because of the salaries they get – but because their vocation is one of caring and compassion. They are certainly at risk, themselves, for what they do – and many have died. May God bless them for their compassionate service!

In his Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul teaches us how every Christian disciple must behave in everything that we do. Whether we are eating, drinking, or doing anything else, we must do everything for the glory of God! We must always treat everyone with kindness and compassion – not because of selfish reasons – not because we want something from them – We must treat them in the best way possible because that is what Jesus, himself, would do!

As Jesus revealed God the Father who sent him, we must reveal Jesus who is the image of God. We must reveal Jesus and make him present to others by our behavior, our actions, and our attitude. Every aspect of our behavior should lead others to see not our goodness, but the goodness of God and His glory. This is the only real reason to do anything – and our purpose for life in this world.

Brothers and Sisters, in today's Gospel, the healed leper made an offering in thanksgiving for what God had done for him through Jesus. How often do we make an offering to God in gratitude for what we have received? Moreover, these alms best be given to the poor in our midst – as well as to the millions of poor in the world! Just think what could happen throughout the world if every person who was blessed by God would share what they have with those who have so much less!

Although the godless wealthy often do nothing for the poor, we must make God visible by our compassionate actions. We must reach out to others to help, to serve, and to bless them with our gifts.

So, let us pray, today, that we may learn to make Jesus present to everyone – by who we are and by all that we do!

Amen.

February 14, 2021

Msgr. Russell G. Terra