

## 'FULL HEALING'

6th Sunday Ordinary Time – HOMILY – 11 FEBRUARY 2018

*"A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, 'If you choose, you can make me clean.'  
Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him,*

***'I do choose. Be made clean!'***

*Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.  
After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, saying to him,*

***'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'***

*But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter."*

## AN EXTRA CHALLENGE

Today's Gospel passage in Mark 1:40-45 has an extra challenge, depending on which ancient Greek text you use. In ancient copies, there are two different words.

### VERSION 1

The New Revised Standard Version above says,

***"Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him."***

It translates the Greek word *'splanchnistheis'*.

The sense of the word can go beyond **'pity'** to **'be moved with compassion'**. Sometimes when you are so moved, you feel even your bowels moving.

That **depth of compassion**.

A word that appears several times in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

### VERSION 2

Whatever word or phrase we use in English, there is still another challenge.

Some ancient texts don't use this word

but another Greek word that we translate as 'anger'.

## WHAT TYPE OF ANGER IN THIS CASE?

### JESUS HEALS THE LEPER FULLY. WHAT WOULD JESUS THEN BE ANGRY ABOUT?

We can see hints already in Chapter 1,

and it will become more evident in Chapter 2 and the early part of Chapter 3.

The healing miracles do not remain local.

People tell others, the word gets out, and Jesus becomes so popular, that it restricts his moving freely around in his mission.

Already he has moved on from Capernaum.  
The popularity leads to conflict with the authorities.  
The more popular he is, the more threatened the authorities feel.  
They see the authority of Jesus as dangerous to them.

### **HOW MANY TIMES IN OUR LIVES DO WE DISCERN A WAY FORWARD, AND THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS?**

Our anger might be more like frustration.  
We can be fully attentive to someone's needs, and at the same time,  
angry at injustice or circumstances of disrespect.

Both versions, 'moved with compassion' or 'angry'.  
We can identify with both. Both words speak to us.

In both senses, they are applicable to the beginning this week of Lent.

- In many Church responses to sexual abuse,  
we have not been filled with deep compassion  
for the survivors and their families and friends.  
The compassion word is a compassion that a person acts on.  
Jesus is moved deep within, compassionate and follows through.
- In so many Church responses to sexual abuse,  
we have not been angry enough with ourselves  
to strongly desire to reach out fully  
to the survivors and their families and friends.  
How we as church have distorted the mission that Jesus intends!

### **HEALING**

In Leviticus 13:45-46 we see restrictions on people with prominent skin infections.

- must wear torn clothes, have hair dishevelled,
- must cover upper lip and cry out "Unclean! Unclean!"
- must live alone outside the camp
- is unclean, as long as the disease remains.

The man in today's Gospel does not follow the law.  
How desperate must he be?!  
He knows within himself that Jesus can heal him fully  
and return him to community and religious life.  
Jesus can turn his whole life around.

But can he get close enough to Jesus for Jesus to heal him?  
By law he is not allowed.  
And if he calls out "Unclean! Unclean!",  
will people push Jesus away from him, or block his path?

In desperation, he breaks the law. He approaches Jesus.  
He kneels before Jesus and says:

*'If you choose, you can make me clean.'*

Not just healed physically,  
but made clean as well, religiously and communally.  
We know ourselves in life that healing is not just physical,  
but psychological and emotional and spiritual.  
Healing is holistic.

Jesus responds:

*"Moved with pity (or anger), Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him,  
and said to him,*

***'I do choose. Be made clean!'***

*Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.*

*After sternly warning him he sent him away at once,  
saying to him,*

***'See that you say nothing to anyone;***

***but go, show yourself to the priest,***

***and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'"***

Having healed him and made him clean,  
Jesus refers him now back to the priest and Mosaic law to be declared clean.  
Jesus shows him a path forward.  
The priest would then restore him officially to the community.

**HOW DO WE RESPOND TO PEOPLE WHO ARE DESPERATE?  
HOW DO WE KNEEL BEFORE JESUS WHEN WE ARE DESPERATE?**

### **BEGINNING OF LENT 2018**

The Australian Catholic Bishops have declared the 1<sup>st</sup> four Days of Lent 2018  
as a time of fasting and reparation for the sexual abuse in the Catholic Church.  
We pray that we own our shame as Church.

This coming Saturday at 10am in our Church will be a ***"Liturgy of Lament and Sorrow"***.  
A permanent memorial is also being prepared for our prayer garden.  
The night before, at our weekly Friday Prayer Vigil,  
we will also bring our special prayer intention before God.  
This weekend there is a handout from our Archbishop for these coming days.  
And a prayer for home.

### **WE PRAY**

**We pray that we are moved by full compassion and by anger,  
and we pray that we may act as Jesus does.**

We recognise the desperation of many who reported abuse,  
and instead of being believed, they were turned away.

**We pray for healing – physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual.**  
We pray for healing for **individual people, their families and friends.**  
We pray for healing in **our community.**

There will be many individual, family and group intentions that parish family members bring before God this Lent. Pope Francis invites all people of good will to share in this Lenten journey.

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/021118.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook11022018>]

[ACBC Statement - '4 Days of Fasting & Reparation' - Prayer Resources]

### *'Full Healing'*

