

## For The Bulletin Of February 11, 2018



### THE SIXTH SUNDAY IN WINTER'S ORDINARY TIME

#### *From Father Robert*

After many weeks, we have come to the conclusion of the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark. What a whirlwind it has been. From the opening sentence announcing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Son of God, to John the Baptist, the calling of disciples, casting out demons, healing the sick, including Simon's mother-in-law, preaching synagogues, and now concluding with the healing of someone with a skin disease, the story has been like riding a roller coaster. We reach new heights and move swiftly from episode to episode.

Though our English Bibles refer to the person cured as a "leper," the term means anyone with a skin disease. An entire chapter in the Book of Leviticus (Chapter 13) is dedicated to diagnosing and treating skin diseases, which were broadly categorized in the ancient world as "leprosy." Verses 45-46 of that chapter in Leviticus discuss how the person with the disease is to behave, namely, by crying "unclean, unclean" before approaching others, and living

apart from the community for as long as the infection lasts.

So the healing performed by Jesus is not merely a healing of the skin disease, though it is certainly that. By telling the man to show himself to the priest, Jesus is, in effect, setting up the situation so the man will be brought back into the community. Once the priest declares the infection gone, the afflicted person may return as a full-fledged member of the people, without having to cry out "unclean, unclean" as he goes about his business. It is for this reason, among others, that scholars and preachers say that Jesus' ministry was about inclusion. He ministered to those on the margins, or even outside the community, like this person with a skin disease, and Jesus made them whole. Once whole, the excluded persons could be welcomed back.

Interestingly, even though Jesus warned the man sternly and ordered him not to tell anyone (aside from the priest), the cured man publicized the matter widely! And this publicity affected Jesus' ministry so that He was no longer able to enter towns openly. It's as though Jesus were being stalked by the ancient equivalent of the paparazzi. He was not even left alone in the "deserted places" outside the villages.

By the conclusion of the first chapter of Mark, the stage has been set. What will happen to this wonder-worker? Will His fame spread beyond the backwater of Galilee? Who else on the margins or outskirts of society will He embrace? What kind of whirlwind will this be?

### *Living The Paschal Mystery*

Sometimes the news is so good we can't keep it to ourselves. This might happen when someone is getting married, or having a baby, or is out of the hospital after a long illness. Our joy cannot be contained and so it was with the man afflicted with the skin disease. Even though Jesus Himself told him to keep it quiet, that was simply not possible. He told everyone! The news spread throughout the region and Jesus was left to live with the consequences. Why was the cured man so joyful? Not only because the affliction was cured, but now he was able to be restored to the community. No longer would he have to shout "unclean, unclean" before approaching anyone. Now he was whole and an integral part of the people.

Whom do we exclude today? What is today's equivalent of an ancient skin condition? Are there groups or individuals who are effectively preceded with shouts of "unclean?" Jesus' desire is not merely to heal the man's skin, but to restore him to the group. In effect, the healing of the leper was as much for the community as it was for the leper. The community had rejected this persona and would not accept him with that condition. If we want to be like Jesus we can find those on the margins and bring them into the fold. We may not have the power to heal physical ailments, but we can certainly reach out to the marginalized and draw them close.

What personal issues does this raise for you?

- Who are the "lepers" in our own "villages" who frighten us and cause us to run away, lest somehow we become "contaminated?"

- Have you ever felt like a "leper" – segregated, isolated, estranged lest somehow we become "contaminated?"
- What does it mean to act out of compassion?
- Have you ever "wished" to act in a certain way, but did not? Have you ever found yourself in a situation in which God's presence was unmistakably clear, but you were reluctant or even afraid to acknowledge that presence?



The Floral Arrangement at the Altar today is placed To The Glory of God and In Honor of the Eleventh Anniversary of Marriage of **Mark and Jennifer Webster**. Congratulations and may God continue to bless you with the deepening of your love and many more years of happiness!

### *A Reflection: "What Breaks Your Heart?"*

This is the season of self-improvement. We challenge ourselves to get slimmer, stronger, and smarter in the new year. We are bombarded with programs and products that will supposedly help us to get out of debt, get in shape, and become better people.

Getting out of debt and getting into shape are good goals, but they aren't what inspire you to greatness. In fact, when you think about the people you

respect and admire the most, chances are they didn't devote their lives to becoming the best version of themselves. Instead, they devoted their lives to making a difference in the world – or at least in someone's world – and they brought about real change.

Perhaps the way to become a better person is actually to focus less on yourself and more on what's going on around you. If you're wondering how you can make a difference in the world with so many unmet needs, start by asking yourself a question.

### ***What breaks my heart?***

This question has the potential to shape your perspective and priorities. When you think about everything going on in our nation and in our community, what is the one unmet need that captures your attention and emotion? Perhaps there is an issue that comes to mind and you think, *something needs to be done about that*. You find yourself getting passionate about it, talking about it with others, and looking around to see if anyone is doing anything about it.

We have all benefitted from people along our path who have gone outside the realm of personal New Year's resolutions and asked how they could help meet a need around them.

There is an old Latin proverb that says, "What man is a man who does not leave the world or make the world better?" You may not be able to meet every need or change the whole world, but you can meet somebody's need or improve a slice of the world.

Think about what it is that breaks your heart. Instead of going into and through this year asking the question that most people will ask – "What should I do about me?" – try asking the question, "What should be done around me?"

If you really want to become a better person this year, do something to make the world a better place.

It's *your move*.

### ***Pastoral Council***

The 8-member Pastoral Council of St. Ignatius of Antioch, in 2018, is seeking to add discerning, dynamic, and out-of-the-box thinkers to join us in our role of supporting and advising Father Robert in his practical leadership of our parish. Recent attrition in Council membership has made it increasingly difficult to vote meaningfully on various proposals, and has decreased the pool of new ideas from which truly creative solutions must draw their inspiration. Please consider our invitation to attend the upcoming regular monthly meeting, Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 p.m., to learn more about our Council's work, especially if you identify yourself as one or more of these:

- A faithful participant at Masses throughout the year, as full immersion in that established liturgical and social milieu is essential in order to speak out on behalf of the Holy Community...
- A member of an unrepresented language group that seeks a voice. Currently, one married couple on Council, Oscar and Zoila, is Spanish speaking, and though they bring a keen awareness to the table of spiritual priorities endeared to

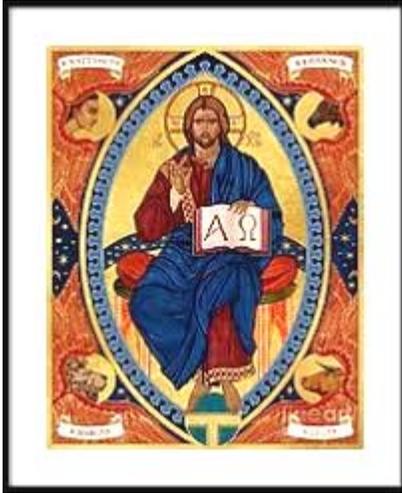
their cultural family, undeniably, there are other language groups who should enrich the Council as well, bringing their charisms to bear inside, rather than outside, the works...

- A Catholic reasonably well-educated in the story of our Church, locally, nationally, and historically. It is essential to know where we are coming from in order to wisely navigate our current and future path, even in just our “little parish...”
- If you are “young,” that is to say, not a grandparent, like 75% of the Council! For instance, Mark and Kathleen, not married to each other, are working parents of very young children whom they regularly bring to Mass, and as such, have a vested interest in seeing their parish thrive for this upcoming generation, and therefore also speak their minds at Council with a principled authority that is fully heard and valued...
- You are a single, working professional, or still in college, please also consider what your input could mean to the health of our church. Your numbers are growing, and your educational background would provide needed fresh, vital insights...
- You can commit to attend regularly, on the second Tuesday of each month, as moving forward in managing our parish is impossible unless we are all on the “same page,”

to start with. Father gives important updates we call the “State of the Parish,” topics of current and upcoming concern sometimes already known to parishioners at large, but just as often, not yet known, and which we must bear together, fairly.

Pastoral Council has no budget, and requires no regular dues or financial commitments other than willingly sharing the costs of various projects we agree to undertake. For instance, we have taken responsibility for two annual (now reduced to one) New Parishioners’ Brunches, two annual leadership dinners, and usually two dinners at winter shelters that our parish supports. We cook our own food (often together as a team), or bring in dishes that we have made and want to share with our guests. Our spread-out costs rarely exceed \$20 per member per event. We have great fun together, and this mix boasts some wonderful cooks and even more enthusiastic eaters! Please consider joining our ranks for a position of three years’ duration. You will be greatly blessed.

Catherine Vidaurri



***Blessing and Dedication of The Christ in Majesty Icon***

At the conclusion of our 10:00 a.m. Liturgy this morning we will bless and dedicate the new Christ in Majesty Icon that has been installed at the tympanum over the central entrance to the church. The Icon is the Gift of **Don Benson in Loving Memory of his wife, Sheryl Young Benson.** On behalf of all of us, I wish to thank Don for his extraordinary generosity in making this Icon possible which completes the exterior artwork on the church.



Last week, through both a Pastoral Letter and presentation at each weekend liturgy, I introduced this year's Bishop's Appeal, "Lighting The Way." As we begin our efforts to raise funds for our Diocese and our parish through the Appeal, let us remember that our individual gifts

when combined with that of parishioners from across the Diocese makes a significant difference in the lives of so many people who rely upon our church for their spiritual, pastoral, educational, and human needs.

As you heard last weekend, the Bishop's Appeal is an annual program that helps fund a variety of Diocesan needs throughout the greater East Bay area. Every parish in our Diocese is participating in the Appeal, which this year has an overall goal of \$3 million dollars. This year, our Diocese hopes to exceed that goal as it did in last year's Appeal, and with our help, we can do it!

This year, our parish goal is \$34,900. I know the generosity of our parishioners and I believe we can do this together. We can reach our parish goal with a one-time gift from each of our 615 registered/participating/supporting families of \$60.00. I realize that some of us will contribute more, some will contribute the exact amount, and others will give what they are able, however, the success of the Appeal happens when ALL of us participate. If you are unable to contribute financially, then I invite you to offer prayers for the success of this year's Appeal and you can even list those prayers on the Commitment Card.

The ministries and programs this Appeal will fund demand a strong response from all the parishes of the Diocese. Together, with our entire Diocesan family, we share in the

mission of the church. We share in reaching out to those I need. We are stewards of our faith.

Once again today you will find brochures on the credenza that explain the Appeal in all of its various facets as well as Commitment Cards/Envelopes in the pews. The brochure outlines how we will all benefit from a successful and collective effort. Please pray for the success of the Appeal and your part in it. Please place your one-time Gift of \$60 or more in the envelope provided that will reflect your gratitude for God's gifts to you.

Next weekend, February 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> is Commitment Weekend throughout the Diocese. At each liturgy, we will take a few moments to ask for your gift and collect your completed Commitment Cards/envelopes. My hope and dream is to raise the entire amount next weekend. If you are unable to be with us, please mail in your Commitment Card/Envelope to the parish or drop it by the office.

There are three things I want you to remember:

**ONE:** We are part of a larger, Universal church – sharing our gifts and sharing in one faith.

**TWO:** The needs of our Diocese and its parishes are supplemented through the funds raised in the Bishop's Appeal. The \$3 million goal defines only a portion of what it costs to offer these ministries and services, which serve thousand of people throughout the East Bay.

**THREE:** Each of us is blessed in some way. It is up to us to share

these blessings and our faith. The Bishop's Appeal gives us the opportunity to respond as faithful stewards of those blessings and our faith as we go forth as part of "Lighting The Way."

Thank YOU for what YOU will do to help us reach our parish goal.



Ash Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, marks the beginning of Lent. Our liturgies that day have been scheduled as follows:

**8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with the Blessing and Imposition of Ashes**

**12:00 Noon Liturgy of the Word with the Blessing and Imposition of Ashes.**

*We welcome the parishioners of St. John's Lutheran Church who are joining us for this service as they are currently without a pastor.*

**5:30 p.m. Liturgy of the Word with the Blessing and Imposition of Ashes**

**7:30 p.m. Solemn Sung Evening Prayer with the Blessing and Imposition of Ashes**

## ***Spending Lent with Alexa***

by Fr. Thomas Reese, SJ

A Catholic priest should not have a woman in his bedroom at night, but I have become quite dependent on Alexa.

She turns the light on when I come into my room, and she turns it off after I am in bed. When I have to get up in the middle of the night, she turns the light on and off and tells me what time it is. She also tells me what the weather is like and what my appointments are. If I treated a real woman like I treat Alexa, I would quite justly get banged over the head.

Alexa is a smart lady, but not a genius. She is good on spelling (I'm not), but when I asked her, "Who is Jesus?" she read from Wikipedia. She is also diplomatic. When I asked her, "Is there a God?" she responded, "People all have their own views on religion."

I am becoming so dependent on my electronic gadgets like Alexa, that I probably should give her and my other electronic attachments up for Lent. That would be a real penance!

Doing penance is one of the ancient traditions of Lent. It reflects the Christian's desire to spend 40 days fasting in imitation of Jesus, who fasted in the desert. It also has historical roots in the time when public sinners were required to do public penance during Lent, only to be readmitted to church at the Easter Vigil.

But I am not giving Alexa up for Lent. In fact, I will be spending more time with her.

Penance was not always the central focus of Lent. In ancient times, Lent was also a time to prepare catechumens for baptism at the Easter Vigil. The catechumens would gather in the cathedral every day during Lent, and the bishop would teach them about Christianity. This was before print, so there were no catechisms. Instead, he used the Scripture readings of the day. As a result, the daily Scripture readings during Lent are a wonderful summary of the Christian message. They include the most famous and most important readings of the Scriptures: on fasting and prayer, on forgiveness and reconciliation, on commitment and charity, on justice and love, etc. Your favorite parables are also read during this season.

They are the original catechism of the Catholic Church. Listening to these readings is a perfect way to spend Lent, even if you don't go to church. This is where Alexa comes in. Every morning when I am trying to get out of bed, I say, "Alexa, ask Catholic Daily for the readings for today."

"Catholic Daily" is what Amazon calls a "Skill" and is downloaded into the Amazon Alexa app on my iPhone. (The only other Catholic "Skill" I could find was "Sleep Sounds: Gregorian Monks.") Alexa does not mind repeating the readings throughout the day, which is great since I need reminding.

If you would like a more human approach, there are the "Daily Readings from the New American Bible," downloadable into "Podcasts" on the iPhone. They are also available at USCCB.org. The Gospels are always read by clerics, with the other readings

by lay Catholics. On Sunday, the responsorial psalm is sung. Some of the voices I recognize, especially the cardinals.

Alexa, however, is spoiling me by making it so easy to ask for the readings. On the other hand, she is not good at supplying future readings. In fact, tomorrow's readings are not always available even late in the evening the night before. Thus, it is impossible to hear the Sunday readings earlier in the week as you can with Podcasts.

For those preferring text, the daily Scripture readings are available at USCCB.org or through apps like iBreviary.

When I asked Alexa to pray for me, she responded, "I will keep you in my thoughts." But when I told her, "Alexa, write my column," she ignored me. Nobody's perfect.

[Jesuit Fr. Thomas Reese is a columnist for Religion News Service and author of *Inside the Vatican: The Politics and Organization of the Catholic Church*.]



To all our volunteers who do so much for the parish: those who arrive early each Saturday morning to clean and prepare the church for the weekend:

**Jun Bajet, Kathy Romeo, Emilia Freking, Carole Miller, and Steve Rojek.**

...those who clean and maintain the bathrooms throughout the week: **Robert Goncalves, Virginia Noack, Mary Ewing, Patricia Britton, and Harlan Young.**

...to **Dilcia Aparacio** who does such an excellent job of washing, ironing, and caring for the Sacred Linens.

...to our Sacristans and Altar Guild who prepare the sanctuary for the celebration of Eucharist each week:

**Peter Degl'Innocenti, Pam and Rich Confetti, Vincent Rodriguez, Harlan Young, Rowena Cayaban, Monika Kauer, Cynthia Enrique, Belen Farin, Nancy Santos and Rose Salamanca.**

...to **our counting teams** who are here every week to count the weekly collections.

...to our volunteers who assisted in the parish office last week:

**Jeannine Ford, Melodye Costanza, Harlan Young, Alicia Perez, Yvette Young, Joe Fanfa and Bev Iacona.**

...to our St. Vincent de Paul and Mobile Mall volunteers who transported last week's donations: **Bob Carvalho and Barbara Jackson.**

...to our faithful weekly bulletin assembly team: **Bob Carvalho, Carole Miller, Dave Costanza, Vangie Parrilla, Belen Farin, Beth Enea, Kathy Augusta and Vince Augusta.**

...to our wonderful Parking Lot Security who keep watch over our vehicles during the weekend liturgies:

**Don Benson, Steve Rojek and Bob Goncalves.**