

Reflection Questions

- What personal experience do you have being healed by the hand of Christ?
 - Does it involve desperation, such as that shown by the leper in this week's Gospel?

- How does the local church serve as a "field hospital" in your community?
 - How does your experience, strength, and hope play a role?

Living the Steps Series Begins Soon

Join us for a 20-week series as we overlap the Twelve Steps with the sacramental life of the Catholic Church

- Wednesdays at 7:30 PM ET/4:30 PM PT beginning February 17 (Ash Wednesday)
- Meetings held via Zoom and last for 1 hour 15 minutes
- Each meeting involves some education, reflection, and large group/small group discussion
- To register, visit catholicinrecovery.com/livingthesteps

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

1st Reading: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

Gospel: Mark 1:40-45

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Soon after he became the Holy Father, Pope Francis mentioned that he sees “the Church as a field hospital after battle.” We know by our own personal experience, as well as national data on the number of families impacted by addiction, that we are all wounded and in need of healing. Thus, rather than serving as a dispatcher and handing off the vulnerable, the Church ought to be a beacon of light to anyone seeking to make difficult adjustments in their lives.

Showing up to be part of a fellowship helps us grow while providing a place for others to come find new life and new perspective. By doing so, we open the doors of the Church to share the saving grace of Jesus Christ. This is not an act that keeps the wonders of Christ focused inward, but instead one that allows our Lord to enter the world for all to be awoken.

The readings of this Sunday's Mass emphasize a change from the old ways of dealing with uncleanness and sin. The First Reading details what is to be done with a leper:

*As long as the sore is on him he shall declare himself unclean,
since he is in fact unclean.
He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp.*

Perhaps we've felt that way about ourselves and loved ones. When we don't tend to our own needs and wounds, we may tidy up everything that we can in our lives in order not reveal the insanity that's taking place. The good news is that Jesus changes the way we treat those with unclean spirits. He heals them. Hear the faith expressed in this week's Gospel Reading:

*A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down
begged him and said,
"If you wish, you can make me clean."
Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched
him, and said to him,
"I do will it. Be made clean."
The leprosy left him immediately,
and he was made clean.
Then, warning him sternly,
he dismissed him at once.*

It would suit us well to approach Jesus with the same kind of faith. When we work the Second Step, we are asked to come to believe that God can restore us to sanity. Motivated by the findings of a thorough First Step, we put our faith in Him and seek to do His will.

This is the movement of the Church—to make disciples of all nations, healing in the name of Jesus Christ and proclaiming the gospel. When we remain too inward-focused as a Christian community, we lose the essence of our mission.

Pope Francis calls for a radical re-imagining of how the local church can serve as a "field hospital" while inviting us to show concern for the wounded. This is how recovery works—by leaning on each other to share hope and considering the needs of those who are willing to seek help.

Last week, Saint Paul challenged us to become weak to serve the weak. To do this, we simply share what it was like for us, what happened, and what life is like now. We can speak with authority when we lead with our experience, strength, and hope. Recalling the past is different than dwelling on the past. The former brings connection with the newcomer and keeps the memory of our deliverance fresh. The latter keeps us stuck in shame and discounts what God can and will do.

If you are wounded, seek help. If you've been helped, seek the wounded.