

# NOW, is the HEALING TIME



*Ecce tempus idoneum, Medicina peccaminum...*

*"Now is the healing time decreed for sins of heart, deed, word..."*

These is the first line of the English translation of a beautiful medieval hymn sung at evening prayer during Lent.

The three days between Ash Wednesday and the First Sunday of Lent are a sort of liturgical 'porch' or 'anti-chamber', to help us tune in to the meaning of Lent and to the grace it carries.

Pope Francis has entitled his Lenten Message for this year "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem". It is in Jerusalem that Christ will suffer, die, rise, and send the Holy Spirit. In Chapter 53 of the prophet Isaiah we find the most vivid image and truthful meaning of what happened in Jerusalem:

*"ours were the sufferings he bore, ours the sorrows he carried, but we thought of him as someone punished, struck by God, and brought low. Yet, he was pierced through for our faults, crushed for our sins, on him lies the punishment that brings us peace, and through his wounds we are healed"*

In the Hebrew Bible the word for 'stricken by God' has a very particular meaning, it refers to being struck with leprosy. Christ, a leper? Did Christ catch up leprosy? Yes he did; when he touched the leper as reported by the Gospel of Mark this Sunday. Christ did not just cure the leper, no; Christ took on his/her leprosy.

It is a body full of plagues that rose from the dead and that same body breathed the Holy Spirit. Our Saviour made himself a 'leper' so that we all could be healed of our own leprosy.

Oh Blessed Lent, now is the time decreed for our healing... fasting, praying, and almsgiving are our Lenten vaccines...

*In manus.*

Father Ivano