

SUNDAY PLUS

Be touched by Jesus

The next step

by Claire Wright

Two things strike me in today's Gospel - the first is the physical healing of the leper. Having battled several serious illnesses throughout my twenties, I know what it is to beg God for healing. The leper's desperate words have been spoken by my own lips. And while I still wait on healing in some areas, I know what it is like to feel the touch of Jesus heal you miraculously. I know what it is like to have doctors dumbfounded as they abandon heavier treatments upon finding a cancer disappeared.

But the second thing is, in many ways, the hardest for me to hear. Jesus has just healed this

man - he is ready and willing to do anything Jesus asks of him. He longs to know what plans Jesus has for his newly healthy body. And then he hears from Jesus just one instruction. The next step. So often, God only shines a light on the next right thing, knowing that too much makes us proud, but the next step leads us back to him every time.

Claire Wright is a Brighton-based freelance writer who runs a faith blog and a healthy family food website, all while taking care of two lively toddlers.



Be healed

by Paul Higginson

We are all broken in some way – few of us are truly whole. This can be through such things as ill-health, poverty, bereavement, loneliness, anxiety, addiction, relationship difficulties, lack of confidence, or simply a sense of disappointment with how our lives have turned out. No doubt the leper in today's Gospel experienced many of these feelings. Yet the touch of Jesus was enough to bring about physical and spiritual healing – his leprosy went and he was no longer a social outcast. What are the areas in our lives that need the healing touch of Jesus? Place these before him in prayer today and ask for his blessing. Of course, the power of

Jesus can be passed on too – so we are challenged to become aware of the broken ones around us, and extend to them the hands that heal and bless, so that the love of God can spread from us to them.

Paul Higginson is the Assistant Principal at the Catholic Sixth Form College in Harrow and has been a parish catechist for thirty years.

“The proclamation of the Gospel of Life urgently requires that we as a community become a field hospital, ready to heal wounds and to offer always a path of reconciliation and forgiveness.”

Pope Francis

Be cleansed

by James Gallogly

Throughout the Gospels Jesus is approached with requests for healing. In those times leprosy was a particularly horrendous disease, sufferers not only experiencing great pain but also social isolation. We have learned something of that curse!

Jesus was generous in his response but also wary, conscious that his every move was scrutinised in order to trip him up. This caution though, never curtailed his will.

People who are unemployed desperately seek the healing of work. We are blessed to have the welfare state yet the process of “signing on” is challenging, bruising and occasionally humiliating. Yes,

we have a safety net, but there is damage in the fall.

The Gospels make abundantly clear that Jesus is always ready to answer when we call. Whether it is our health, our family or our livelihood, we need to constantly seek his touch. It becomes our challenge to fully accept the healing he has for us.

James Gallogly is a Catholic lay chaplain in a UK prison.

Loving Lord, teach me how to touch people's wounded hearts and offer them your healing. Amen.

Prayer for the anniversary year of *Laudato Si'*

Loving God, Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained. Open our minds and touch our hearts, so that we can be part of Creation, your gift. Be present to those in need in these difficult

times, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. Help us to show creative solidarity as we confront the consequences of the global pandemic. Make us courageous in embracing the changes required

to seek the common good. Now more than ever, may we all feel interconnected and interdependent. Enable us to succeed in listening and responding to the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor.

May their current sufferings become the birth-pangs of a more fraternal and sustainable world. We pray through Christ our Lord, under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians. Amen.

Today:
Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46
1 Corinthians 10:31 – 11:1
Mark 1:40-45

Monday:
Genesis 4:1-15, 25
Mark 8:11-13

Tuesday:
Genesis 6:5-8; 7:1-5, 10
Mark 8:14-21

Wednesday:
Joel 2:12-18
2 Corinthians 5:20 – 6:2
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday:
Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Luke 9:22-25

Friday:
Isaiah 58:1-9
Matthew 9:14-15

Saturday:
Isaiah 58:9-14
Luke 5:27-32

Next Sunday:
Genesis 9:8-15
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:12-15