

Make Me Clean!



I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Lev 13:1-2, 44-46)

¹The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²“If someone has on his **skin a scab or pustule or blotch** which appears to be the **sore of leprosy**, he shall be brought to Aaron, the priest, or to one of the priests among his descendants. If the man is **leprous and unclean**, ⁴⁴the priest shall declare him **unclean** by reason of the sore on his head.

⁴⁵“The one who bears the **sore of leprosy** shall keep his garments rent and his head bare, and shall muffle his beard; he shall cry out, ‘**Unclean, unclean!**’ ⁴⁶As 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.”

THE FOCUS: **Leprosy**

COMMENTARY

- V.2 talks about skin diseases turning into leprosy and the need to be brought to the priest for investigation and examination. The priests acted like sanitary inspectors and were in-charge of admissions in the Temple. An unclean person was disqualified from participating in the worship.
- V.44 says a leper is considered unclean; he must be marked on his head he is unclean.
- Vv.45-46 prescribes how lepers should appear, behave and live:
 - torn clothes (*mukhang pulubi*)
 - and disheveled hair (unattractive, unkempt)
 - Upper lip covered
 - Cries out “unclean” (to warn people)
 - Live alone (can’t live with loved ones)
 - Dwells outside the camp (can’t live in the community)

REFLECTIONS

It is terrible to be afflicted with leprosy. Your suffering is multiplied by the rules of religion and society.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 32:1-2, 5,11)
I TURN TO YOU, LORD, IN THE TIME OF TROUBLE, AND FILL ME WITH THE JOY OF SALVATION.

SECOND READING (1 Cor 10:31—11:1)

³¹So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, **do everything for the glory of God.** ³²**Give no offense** to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, ³³just as I **try to please everyone** in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. 11:1 **Be imitators of me**, as I am of Christ.

THE FOCUS: **Be Charitable**

COMMENTARY

- In v.31, St. Paul encourages the faithful to do the basic rules of charity when doing things. You dedicate all your activities to God.
- In v.32, Paul follows up his recommendation in v.31, by being more specific: Give no offense (*don't turn them off*) to all people (*which were divided by now into three: Jews, Greeks, church*).
- In v.33, Paul here is more positive (to please everyone), meaning that whatever he does

will not be for his personal advantage but for others. The reason: **that they may be saved.**

• The last verse (11:1) summarizes what he is trying to say. He is not ashamed to say “Be imitators of me... *(of course, Paul can say that not because he is a perfect man but because he is an actual imitator of Christ [as I am of Christ])*).

REFLECTIONS

Christian faith needs to be translated into Christian charity.

GOSPEL READING (Mk 1:40-45)

⁴⁰A **leper** came to Jesus and **kneeling down begged** him and said, “If you wish, you can make me clean.” ⁴¹Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched **him**, and said to **him**, “I do will it. Be made clean.” ⁴²The **leprosy** left **him** immediately, and **he** was made clean. ⁴³Then, warning him sternly, he dismissed **him** at once.

⁴⁴He said to **him**, “See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them.”

⁴⁵The **man** went away and began to publicize the whole matter. **He** spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places, and people kept coming to him from everywhere.

THE FOCUS: The Leper

COMMENTARY

• The Gospel Reading is about the cleansing of the leper. Take note of the “cleansing” not of healing, although it is correct to use healing. But here the idea of cleansing can mean much more: now as cleansed, the man can participate in the temple liturgy and is restored to the family and society.

• V.40 presents the leper having faith on the power of Jesus over leprosy. The leper does not impose (*kung puede lang, nakikiusap siya*)

• V.41 presents Jesus’ positive response, out of pity. Jesus shows his compassion toward the man. Jesus’ actions: stretched out his hand and touched him. Jesus was cleansing visibly.

• V.42 = the immediate result of Jesus’ act.

• V.43 tells of warning not to broadcast Jesus’ deed to others (this has a bearing of his ‘messianic secret’). Instead, Jesus tells him to present himself to the priest (now he is qualified to participate in the temple liturgy).

• “As a testimony to them,” the cleansed man will make the priests in the temple think of the significant things (Jesus’ words and deeds) happening outside the temple. The priests should be able to make conclusions that should change their lives.

• V.45 shows the opposite. The cleansed man does not go to the priests, but to the people. The result: Jesus can no longer move around openly. However, Mark does not make this an issue.

REFLECTIONS

The leper showed his faith in the power of Jesus and approached him with humility.

II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR SHARING/HOMILY

The First Reading contains instructions on how to deal with lepers and how lepers behave. The Second Reading talks about being charitable to all kinds of people (lepers included). The Gospel Reading talks about how Jesus treated the leper and how the leper reacted.

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