

Lepers' Sunday

Dearly beloved:

Next Sunday, March 5th is the Second Sunday of 50 Days Lent (Lepers' Sunday). On this day, a leper, who begs for healing, is healed by Jesus. The incident creates much excitement. In those times, a Leper is not supposed to approach people who are not afflicted with the disease; he is supposed to keep his distance. In his misery, the Leper kneels before Jesus and says, "If you choose, you can make me clean". The Leper leaves it up to Jesus. If you choose to, if you want to, if you are willing to, you can make me clean. Jesus is moved with pity and compassion. Jesus says, "I do choose. Be made clean". And immediately, the man's disease is cured. Jesus reaches out and touches him. He touches the untouchable. That is touch of God. Once you have felt it, nothing else is important. Maybe that is why the man ignores Jesus' warning and goes around telling people not only that he is clean but how he got that way, and Who made him that way. This is the second miracle in a row where the main decision to perform a miracle is made by Jesus. I would like to inform you that in the Bible there are two other stories about Leprosy. In Numbers, Chapter 12, Miriam challenges the authority of her brother, Moses, and is stricken with the disease until Moses prays for her cure. In II Kings, Chapter 5, Gehazi tells a lie about the prophet Elisha, who, in turn, declares that Gehazi and all his descendants will be Lepers. Ancient Rabbis taught that Leprosy is God's way of punishing gossips and slanderers, people who break the ninth commandment against bearing false witness. A Leper, therefore, is someone who may have slandered a prophet or God. No wonder those that break the rules are punished so severely.

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for this Sunday's commemoration.

Bible readings for Sunday, March 5th, 2006. (Lepers' Sunday)

Before Holy Qurbana:

Genesis - 7: 6-24
II Kings - 5: 1-14
Isaiah - 33: 2-9

Holy Qurbana:

General Epistles: Acts - 9: 22-31
Epistles of St. Paul: Romans - 3: 37 - 4: 5
Holy Gospel: St. Luke - 5: 12-16 ; 4: 40-41

Next Sunday, March 12th is Third Sunday of 50 Days Lent (M'Shario/Paralytic Sunday).

With prayers,
Thomas Alex