

Glory be to the father, son, and holy spirit.

Respected achen, parents, and my dear friends.

Today is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the great lent in which the leper was healed. Leprosy is not only a skin, and flesh eating disease, but it is also a nerve eating disease. Leprosy begins small and then spreads until it covers the whole body. As it spreads, the person starts to lose feeling in every part of their body. It destroys entire limbs, and it eventually causes death.

In the time of Christ, leprosy was more than just an ordinary disease, it was a symbol of great sin. The Jews saw leprosy as a direct judgement by God for what the person had done. Leprosy is like sin where both starts small and eventually consumes the entire body. Leprosy, like sin, was also a sure forerunner of death.

In the gospel of St. Luke, we see the leper coming toward Jesus on his knees. This man was great in faith because he knew that he would have to break the law to get to Jesus. In that time, lepers were forbidden to stand 50 feet of a normal person and had to cry out UNCLEAN as people approached. This man, breaking the law, approached Jesus on his feet and asked to be cleansed. This man came to Jesus on his knees, and fell on his face begging for Jesus to heal him. This showed his humility and portrayed his need for Christ. He knew that only Christ has the power to heal him. What the leper says to Jesus is very important. He says, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." This statement admits his faith and notice how he said, "if you are willing." The leper wasn't doubtful of Jesus' healing powers, but he is aware that God might have other plans for him. In the case of Lazarus, Jesus didn't visit until Lazarus had been dead for 4 days. God wanted Lazarus to be used as an example that Jesus is the resurrection and life.

After the leper asked to be cleansed, Jesus touched him and said to him, "I am willing, be clean." In the gospel of St. Luke, it isn't really specific about when the leprosy left the man. If we look at the other gospels, such as St. Matthew, or St. Mark, both states that the leprosy left the man after Jesus spoke. Most people would have said that it was because Jesus had touched the leper that he had become clean. However, that is not the case and the leper was cleansed after Jesus spoke. This truly shows the power of Jesus' words. Through this healing, the people become aware that Jesus is truly the Life and Resurrection. This leper, who was surely going to die, was given a new life and chance to enter the kingdom of god.

Through this miracle we become aware of three main facts concerning Christ. The first and most obvious one is his power. Jesus has the power to heal anyone one of us no matter what we did. If we are sorry and truly accept that he is our Savior, we won't have to be afraid of disease because he will make us clean. Another fact is the affection and compassion that he has for each one of us. Jesus did not need to touch the leper because his words are just as powerful. He could've said from a distance "be clean." But why didn't he? By touching the leper, Christ establishes a relationship, of expressing identification, and of showing compassion. Ultimately that was the reason for this gesture, to heal in such a way that it was an expression not just of power, but also of compassion for this suffering individual. St. Mark tells us that the way Jesus moved his hand to touch the leper showed great pity. The last fact that we see are

Christ's priorities. Jesus was not trying to spread his name throughout the Roman Empire. Otherwise he would have told the leper to go tell everyone that he was healed. His intentions were to heal the sick and give people a chance to enter the kingdom of god by following him.

My dear friends, as the great lent progresses, let each one of us go to god to be cleansed of our impurities. Like the Leper, we must not wait for the Lord to come to us, but instead, we should go to him. Thank you and may the lord bless us all.