

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

A leper[a] came to him begging him, and kneeling[b] he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." Moved with pity Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately the leprosy[e] left him, and he was made clean. After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

I have loved the Gospel of Mark for many years as for me it presents a picture of a suffering Jesus. A Jesus who even though his path was to lead to his crucifixion always welcomed the suffering of all who came to him. The living miracle of healing of the leper Mark 1:40-44 can be read on three levels.

Level 1.

As a simple faith story, yet what about the person who has faith and is not healed. Faith here can be seen by the leper placing his trust and faith in Jesus to heal him. Just as our companions do when they open their suffering to us.

Level 2.

The miracle of touch. When Jesus reaches out and touches the leper, he also becomes the leper and is shunned as lepers were. He is excluded from society and he himself needs to perform the purifying rite before he can reenter society. Jesus identifies with the suffering of others and reaches out to them in their pain and suffering. So too is our challenge to reach out and touch those who suffer regardless of what anyone thinks.

Level 3

Jesus instructs the leper to present himself at the temple and perform the ritual for purifying a cured leper, He is to buy two doves one of the birds is killed the other bird is then dipped in the blood of the dead bird and set free. Here we see our calling as Vincentians as welcoming all into community, to say to our companions welcome home we are here for you. To give as many hands up as necessary until they feel accepted again.

Just as we were also freed from sin by the blood of Christ so too was the person with leprosy purified by the blood of the dove.

St Teresa of Avila

Christ Has No Body

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.



As a Vincentian who do you see as modern-day lepers?

As a Vincentian how do you follow the example of Christ and reach out to those who suffer?

As a Vincentian how do welcome back into society those that society have forgotten, excluded or judged?