

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 31)

ANTIPHON: I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.

RESPONSE: I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.

LECTOR: Happy the man whose offence is forgiven, whose sin is remitted. O happy the man to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, in whose spirit is no guile. **R.**

LECTOR: But now I have acknowledged my sins, my guilt I did not hide. I said: "I will confess my offence to the Lord." And you, Lord, have forgiven the guilt of my sin. **R.**

LECTOR: Rejoice, rejoice in the Lord, exult, you just! O come, ring out your joy, all you upright of heart. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

Or

God so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son, so that all who believe in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.

TODAY'S READINGS Lev 13: 1-2, 44-46; 1 Corinthians 10:31 - 11:1; Mark 1: 40-45

NEXT WEEK (1st Sunday of Lent Year B) Genesis 9:8-15; Psalm 24; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1: 12-15

New
Majellan
podcasts on
Prayer

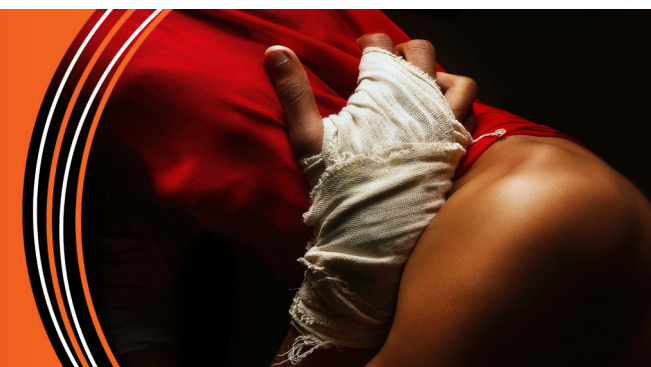
Prayer is Life

Majellan Media has launched a new podcast series on prayer. Prayer is Life is aimed at giving people a better understanding about prayer. The podcasts will be led by Redemptorist priest David Hore CSsR. The new series coincides with the start of a Year of Prayer announced by Pope Francis. For details and to listen go to: <https://majellan.media/prayer-is-life-podcast/>



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Healing the 'unclean'



11 February 2024 6th Sunday Year B

The Old Testament Law existed to protect God's people from physical and moral hazards that could harm the whole community. The Law's emphasis on spiritual and bodily purity established how God's people could live together in a healthy relationship with God and each other.

And a leper was a danger to the whole community. While leprosy, more commonly known today as Hansen's disease, is still a highly contagious infection, in ancient times, it was incurable, and its diagnosis was virtually a death sentence.

The only thing a community could do to protect itself was to quarantine those infected permanently. As a result, lepers had to live outside walled cities, could no longer enter God's presence in the Temple and were forbidden to interact with the community. Even a chance encounter with a leper could make someone unclean.

To re-enter right relationship with God and the community, a leper would need to be healed and ceremonially purified. The process required a Temple priest to investigate a leper claiming to have been healed and then pronouncing them fit to re-enter contact with God and with other people. The healing of leprosy was so rare that many rabbis considered it akin to raising someone from the dead and the rare holiness of the healer.

The leper in today's gospel identifies Jesus as the one through whom the power of God is uniquely present. Instead of notifying Jesus of his condition by shouting "unclean,

unclean" and avoiding contact with Jesus, as the Law demanded, the leper's plea of "If you wish, you can make me clean" shows his utter confidence in Jesus' power. And instead of avoiding the leper to preserve his cleanness, Jesus touches him. From the perspective of the leper, this may have been the first time another human being touched him in years. In this moment, Jesus restores both human and divine contact to the leper who had been cut off from both.

The response of Jesus to the leper is his response to all of us who have been devastated by the effects of sin, sickness, and death. Jesus is not disturbed, scandalised, or tainted by any human impurity. Instead, he restores in us the capacity for communion with God and others.

As St Paul reminds us, the true fulfilment of the Law, and the primary healing work of God, is cleanness from the disease of sin, which rots the inside of a person and prevents authentic communion. As Jesus says elsewhere in the gospels, "First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean."

Jesus' holiness goes beyond what the Temple priests could accomplish and what the Law of Moses could prescribe. Jesus can purge uncleanness from everyone who comes to him in faith since no defilement can touch him. Jesus does not just pronounce us clean, like the Temple priests could, but he makes the whole person clean, inside and out.