

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Leper approaches the Lord, but before he speaks, he worships Him. His actions, and his words, are a confession of saving faith. That's what faith does. True faith, saving faith, faith worked by the Holy Spirit, worships Christ. St. Matthew doesn't describe specifically what the Leper does, but St. Mark and St. Luke record his actions. St. Mark writes that the Leper fell down and knelt before Him. Then, according to St. Luke, he prostrated himself at the Lord's feet.

The physician St. Luke also gives more detail regarding the man's disease. He was not simply displaying the first signs of his affliction. St. Luke reveals that the man was "full of leprosy". He was covered with lesions and the with the horrible violence that leprosy does to the flesh, an outward manifestation of the more horrible internal affliction.

In his suffering, in his uncleanness, in his horrible condition, the Leper approached the Lord, and fell down and worshipped Him. That is what you have done today. Before this Mass began, you fell down on your knees and you confessed your horrible condition. You confessed that you were not simply displaying the first signs of the disease, rather that you were full of sin. You confessed that the outward signs of your disease were symbols of a more horrible internal infection.

Like leprosy, sin is a condition that cannot be hidden from those around you. Those with whom you come into contact are all aware of your condition. And like leprosy, it is a disease that the carrier spreads to those around him. Sinful words and actions draw like response from other fallen men. Sinners react sinfully to the sin of others. And like the Leper, you know that being full of that disease, the disease of sin, is a fatal condition.

So you came and fell down on your knees before the same Lord. You beat your breast and sincerely confessed your uncleanness. You knelt alongside the Leper, unable to save yourself, trusting in the One at whose feet you knelt, the One to whom you pray. Only saving faith can do that. Sincere contrition is a fruit of faith, a fruit that leads to true repentance.

And then you too asked what that Leper asked: "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." You used different words. You asked that the Lord "have mercy on me, forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life." In faith you asked for a greater cleansing than did the Leper – a cleansing of body and soul. You did it, as did the Leper, believing. You sought the very thing that your Lord promises, for it is His promise that works faith in you, trust that He can truly heal.

For the Lord who healed the Leper said "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Many are those who believe they are well, and have no need of the healing that the Lord gives. But they're wrong. No one is good, but One. Those who reject Him are sons of the kingdom that will be cast into the outer darkness.

Those who think they need no healing are the walking dead, full of the disease of sin, but in their hubris and in their pride unwilling to seek the only One that can truly heal. As if that weren't

bad enough, like Naaman, they desire to formulate their own cure, a cure devised from the lunacy of fallenness. They mock and reject the True Physician, the Physician of souls. And as untreated carriers of sin, they continue to infect those around them, and those deluded by their denial that they are full of that fatal disease.

So the Lord justly visits their iniquity on the third and fourth generations, a pandemic of sin. That sin will be cleansed. In the days of Noah, God did it with water. But on the Day of Judgment, it will not be water but fire that cleanses the creation. For “vengeance is Mine, I will repay”, says the Lord. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But you, like the believing Leper, you have sought healing. You came in faith into the presence of the Lord Who Heals. You came to the very place He has promised to be. You confessed your sins, and asked for healing, believing that He alone can heal you, believing that He is willing.

So to the Leper, and to you, Love Incarnate says “I am willing.” He is willing to cleanse, to heal, to forgive, to renew and to quicken. He heals the Leper with a Word. And although he is not worthy that the Lord enter under his roof, still the Lord heals the Centurion’s servant from afar. His Word of healing is efficacious.

And so too He heals you. You are not worthy that He should enter under your roof, and yet you have entered under His roof this day, you have come to the very place He has promised to be. Here He declares you to be forgiven, pure and holy. He gives you the faith necessary to grasp Him, the “great faith” that trusts in Him for your salvation and life.

“Be cleansed”, the Lord declares. He spoke those same Words of absolution to you this day, the absolution, the forgiveness, that He earned for you, because He is willing. He was willing to take on Flesh. He was willing to suffer that Flesh, Holy and Pure, to be torn. He was willing to go to the cross for your cleansing. He was willing to die, and to be entombed. And He was willing to take up His life again on that bright first Easter morn, that the benefits of His cross and empty tomb, and the new life He won, be made yours.

Go and wash, the Prophet directed Naaman. He washed and was miraculously healed. So too does the new and better Elisha: the Prophet, Priest and King, wash you. Not the waters of the Abanah or the Pharpar, but baptismal waters bring Christ’s cleansing to you, that you be given faith to confess the only True God.

You are declared holy, worthy to enter under His roof, the roof of this House of God under which He enters under the signs of Bread and Wine, to give you His Body and His Blood. Believing, you kneel before Him. You eat and drink. And the Lord’s Word of Promise is a Word for you: “As you have believed, so let it be done for you.”

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