

Sunday 6th (B) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 1,40-45): A leper came to Jesus and begged him, «If you so will, you can make me clean». Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, «I will; be clean». The leprosy left the man at once and he was made clean. As Jesus sent the man away, he sternly warned him, «Don't tell anyone about this, but go and show yourself to the priest and for the cleansing bring the offering ordered by Moses; in this way you will make your declaration». However, as soon as the man went out, he began spreading the news everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter any town. But even though he stayed in the rural areas, people came to him from everywhere.

«If you so will, you can make me clean»

Fr. Ferran JARABO i Carbonell
(Agullana, Girona, Spain)

Today, the Gospel invites us to contemplate the faith of this leper. We know that, in Jesus time, lepers were socially rejected and considered as unclean. Cleaning that leper is an anticipated vision of the salvation proposed to all of us by Jesus, along with a call to open our heart so that He may transform it.

The sequence of feats is quite evident. First, the leper begs Jesus to clean him, thus professing his faith: «If you so will, you can make me clean» (Mk 1:40). Then, Jesus—who literally surrenders before our faith— heals him («I will; be clean»), and urges him to follow what the Law commands while warning him to keep silent. Finally, however, the leper feels compelled to «begin spreading the news everywhere» (Mk 1:45). In a way, he disobeys Jesus' last warning, but his experience with the Saviour provokes a reaction his mouth cannot control.

Our life is similar to the leper's life. At times, we live in sin, apart from God and the community. But this Gospel encourages us and offers us a model: to openly

affirm our total faith in Jesus, to completely open our heart to him, and once cleaned by the Spirit, to go around proclaiming that we have met the Lord. This is the consequence of the sacrament of Reconciliation, the sacrament of Joy.

As St. Anselm clearly states: «Our soul has to ignore itself while totally dwelling in Jesus Christ, who has died to deliver us from sin, and has resurrected to make us resurrect to the deeds of justice». Jesus wants us to walk along with Him, He wants to clean us. How do we react? We have to go and meet Him with the leper's humility and let Him help us to die free from sin to live by his Justice.