

Sunday 6th (B) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 1:40-45): A leper came to him and kneeling down begged him and said, “If you wish, you can make me clean.” Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, “I do will it. Be made clean.” The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean... The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter...

The Sacrament of Penance

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, the Evangelist offers us a very miraculous cure. According to the ancient Jewish law, leprosy was not only considered a disease, but also the most serious form of ritual "impurity". It was the priests' duty to diagnose and to declare unclean the sick, which had to be isolated from the community and live outside the populated area. Thus, leprosy constituted a kind of religious and civil death, and its healing a kind of resurrection.

It is possible to see leprosy as a symbol of our sins, which are the true impurity of heart, that can distance us from God, and, if we do not humbly confess them, trusting in divine mercy, they will finally bring about the death of the soul. In his passion Jesus became as a "leper", made impure by our sins, to obtain for us forgiveness and salvation.

—In the Sacrament of Penance, the Crucified and Risen Christ purifies us through his ministers with his infinite mercy, restores us to communion with the heavenly Father and with our brothers, and makes us gift of His love, His joy and His peace.