

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

From ancient Israel's liturgy guide. Lev 13:1-2,44-46
Do everything for the glory of God. 1 Cor 10:31-11:1
Heal you? Of course I want to! Mk 1:40-45

Next week:

Jesus: merciful healer.
Is 43:18-19,21-22,24-25;
2 Cor 1:18-22; Mk 2:1-12.

In a nutshell

In today's Gospel the healing action of Jesus breaks through the isolation and suffering of the leper, revealing the relentlessness of God's salvific love and a powerful sign that the messianic age is at hand. No matter what our sinfulness and isolation, God seeks us out and longs to heal us. Do we believe that?



One Monday

I arrived at school Monday morning to find my class of fifth graders unusually solemn. Almost as one they blurted out the news that the father of one of the boys had been found dead half an hour ago. Immediately I went to the principal's office.

'It's about David's father,' I said to Julie, our principal.

Julie nodded. 'He took his own life this morning. I'll come and speak with the children in fifteen minutes.'

True to her word, Julie entered our hushed classroom. 'These are a couple of precious things from my office,' she began as she placed two items on the desk. 'This is my own prayer candle and this is my small table crucifix. I am going to leave these things in your care for a short while.'

Then she began to talk to the children. Yes, it was true that David was absent because his father had just died, she said. We need not be concerned how he died. Whatever happened, the most important thing to remember is that David has

lost his father. We need to be there for David and support him in his time of loss and sadness...

After school that day, I was sharing a coffee with the grieving family in their living room. There was a knock at the door. It was one of the boys from my class. Wayne had made a card and the children had signed it to be given to David. A short while later there was another knock at the door. This time it was young Grant. He held a cake his mother had made. Ten minutes later Peter appeared. He had a computer game for David to use. And finally, there was young Mark - a casserole for the family.

Four boys from my class had come - on their own - to show their care for David and his family. Far from being scared off by the sense of failure engendered by suicide, these courageous boys had responded with compassion.

Far from home

During my extended stay in Europe (four years) I often felt like a stranger to the human race. My struggle with the language, not to mention the loneliness of being so far from home, was difficult to bear.

Early in my time there I went to Sienna to learn Italian. The day I arrived I walked the streets for what seemed like hours, trying to find the boarding house where I was due that day. Night was falling, my bag was heavy. I tried to phone the boarding house, however I failed to make myself understood over the phone. My anxiety only exacerbated my struggle with the language. When I tried to approach some people in the street to ask for

help, they just looked at me like I was an idiot, a rude tourist or both.

Finally, a woman came by who was altogether different. Although she spoke very little English she took the time to figure out what I was trying to do, made the phone call for me, called a taxi to take me to my destination...and even smiled!

In that smile I felt human again. (Robert)



Think . Pray . Act

- Have I ever felt like a 'leper' - alienated, shunned?

As the body of Christ, there are many situations to which we can bring the compassion of Jesus - if we want to.

- Think and pray about this statement.
- What gesture of love and care do you feel drawn to make?



RealPeople offers faith reflections from the saints and prophets of everyday life.

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