

6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FEBRUARY 11, 2024

Today, February 11th is the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes, and the World Day of the Sick. In the summer of 1979, having completed my first year of seminary in Belgium, I spent 3 weeks in Lourdes doing volunteer work, welcoming pilgrims and discovering the site. Lourdes is beautiful and holy ground. Seeing so many people gathered in prayer and worship was a deeply moving experience etched upon my heart. The daily celebrations of the Sacrament of the Sick underscores the Church's prayer and concern for the sick.

Today's readings speak of sickness and specifically that of leprosy. This skin illness devastated the lives of its victims. Understood as highly contagious, it forced victims to be isolated, misunderstood and ostracised. Life would be turned upside down and family ties were severed. The first reading from the book of Leviticus prescribed severe measures to protect the safety of the tribe. We have weathered many examples of this – the experience of the Pandemic that shattered our sense of security, so recently. The challenge has struck at the core of our society challenging us to action and prayer.

In the Gospel passage from Mark, Jesus is confronted by one asking for healing. Jesus touches him – which was forbidden - and heals the leper. In many ways, it is a sign of the compassion of Jesus for the sick and the healing offered to all.

In our prayer on this day, we assume responsibility in the healing energy of Christ to bring life and abundant life to all suffering from illness, war and injustice. Let us carry all our sisters and brothers in our hearts.

Blessings of peace and healing! Fr. Don

Wednesday is Ash Wednesday – a day of fasting and abstinence. Mass is at 6:30 p.m. Let us begin our Lenten journey with steadfastness and confidence.