

THE GOOD NEWS WEEKLY

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)
Mark 1:40-45 • February 14, 2021

GOSPEL THEME

The healing power of Jesus can touch anyone.

A CHOICE

Lepers were the outcasts of society in Jesus' day. They were not only forbidden to speak to healthy persons, they were even forbidden to come into the city or get anywhere near others. People feared such obvious sickness for more than the obvious reason that they might get sick. They looked upon illness and infirmity as curses from God.

The leper in today's gospel had faith that Jesus was capable of healing him. He need only *choose* to do so. Jesus both touched the leper and spoke to him: "I do *choose*." And then he sent the man to the Temple, so that the healing could be validated by authorities and the man would no longer be an outcast.



Another Choice



There was another man who *chose* to be with lepers — to touch them and speak with them, to live among them and treat them with respect. His name was Father Damien and he was a missionary.

On the Hawaiian island of Molokai there was a colony of lepers.

They had no medical care, no church, no schools — until Father Damien went to Molokai.

Father Damien cared for the spiritual and physical needs of the lepers. He helped them build houses, dressed their sores, and buried their dead. After twelve years on Molokai, Father Damien was stricken with the disease of his people. He died on March 28, 1888, and was buried on Molokai.

Today's Choices

Today there are modern hospitals for people with leprosy, or Hansen's disease. Most people do not believe that those who suffer with illness or infirmity are cursed by God. Lepers are no longer sent away to live and die alone. But others are.

Do you know anyone who is banished like the lepers in Jesus' time? Do you know anyone who is forgotten like the lepers in Father Damien's time? Is there someone in your class who is ignored or treated badly by everyone else? Is there someone in your neighborhood who lives alone and never has visitors? Is there someone in your church community who is talked about or laughed at because he or she is different?

Maybe you could *choose* to imitate Jesus and Father Damien—to touch and to speak to a modern-day "outcast." It would be a perfect way to live out today's gospel message.



S CRIPTURE

C ROSSWORD

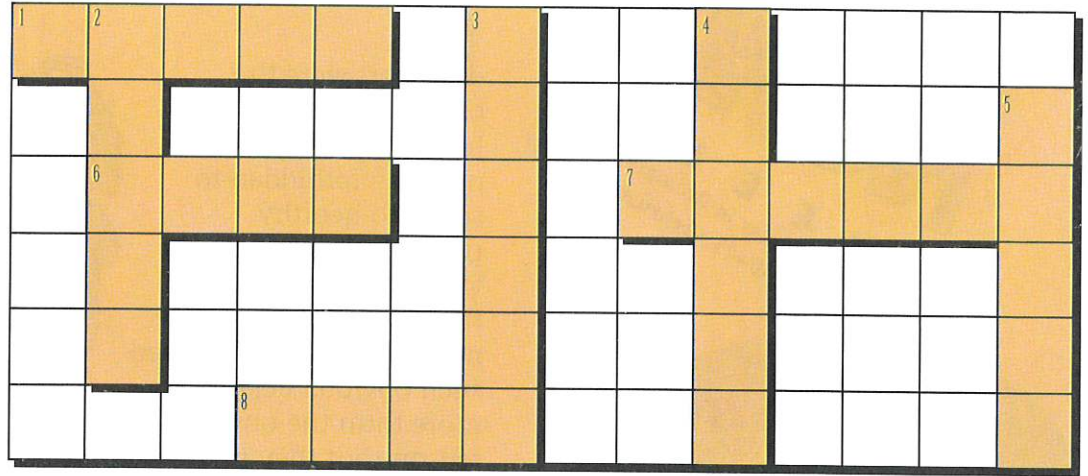
If you need help solving this Scripture crossword, turn to today's gospel, Mark 1:40-45 (New Revised Standard Version).

ACROSS:

1. You can make me _____ (40).
6. Moved with _____ (41).
7. _____ came to him (45).
8. Immediately the leprosy _____ him (42).

DOWN:

2. A _____ came to him (40).
3. Show yourself to the _____ (44).
4. Jesus could no longer enter a town _____ (45).
5. The man _____ to proclaim it freely (45).



SHARING
the
GOOD NEWS
Activity for Class
or Family

Celebrating the Beginning of Lent

Each person write your name on a slip of paper. Put all the names in a hat or a paper bag and mix them up. Take turns drawing out the slips of paper (if you draw your own name, put it back and try for another).

The name on your paper becomes your secret friend for the next week. It is important not to let anyone else know the name of your secret friend. Look for special ways to give of yourself to and for your secret friend. For example, you could take on some of your secret friend's chores, or help with homework. Sometimes maybe you could write an anonymous note of admiration, or secretly leave a small gift. Most importantly, pray for your secret friend daily.

