

HOMILY 6TH SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

FEBRUARY 14, 2021

When I read the readings today about the lepers, I could not help but think of COVID-19. I think it is the leprosy of our time. Even though leprosy was believed to be highly contagious, Jesus reached out and healed the man. I think our health care workers are the hands and feet of Jesus in the world today. They go to work each day, putting themselves at risk, to take care of the sick. I am very thankful for them. I was also thinking how little things have changed over 2,000 years. The only way they knew to prevent the spread of leprosy was to socially isolate people. That is what we are doing again today to reduce the spread of the disease. And I am sure it was no easier 2,000 years ago than it is today. God created us in his own image and likeness. God created us to be in close relationships with others. The isolation has been really hard on all of us. I know we will get back to normal in 2021, because we cannot live in isolation indefinitely. I think we all need to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world today. Think about people you know, especially people that are sheltering alone. Try and reach out to them this week, maybe a call, maybe facetime, maybe a card or letter, maybe a quick porch visit with a little present. Be creative.

We do know some things that we can do to end the pandemic. Getting the vaccine is one of them. I know there are a lot more people that want the vaccine than vaccine is available. Try not to get obsessed with getting the vaccine. The reality is that our lives are not going to change immediately when we get the vaccine. First of all, we have to wait three weeks after we get the second shot of the Pfizer vaccine and four weeks after we get the second Moderna vaccine before we have maximum immunity. Even then, we can still spread the virus to others unknowingly with no symptoms so we will continue to wear a mask, socially distance and avoid crowds. Getting the vaccine will reduce hospitalizations and deaths. Eventually the vaccine will be available to everyone. I decided that the benefits far outweigh the risks, so I have gotten the vaccine. You will all have to make that decision for yourselves, but at least consider the public health issues involved. The other important way we can stop the spread of the virus is to wear a mask when you are in close proximity with people you do not live with. Make sure you are wearing it properly. It should cover your nose and mouth and it goes under your chin. It should be tight against your face. If it keeps falling down, it is either too loose or does not fit you properly. You may need

to get a mask with the wire over the nose. The blue surgical masks have that. I know wearing the masks is a little annoying, but try to let that go and wear the mask. It is a way of respecting the people around us.

Speaking of letting go, we all have a lot to let go of this year, so our theme for Lent is “Let Go and Follow Jesus.” Some of the things we need to let go of are related to COVID-19. I know we are tired of spending so much time alone, but try and let go of that and see it as an opportunity to pray. Set up some prayer practices you would like to follow during Lent. We have the Little Black Book available in the gathering space, and there are also some available in the outer lobby of the office building for those who are not coming to Mass right now. Participate in the Consecration to St. Joseph, details for this were in the email this week, on the website and in the bulletin. Come to Eucharistic Exposition and Adoration on Tuesdays that starts after the 9:00 am Mass and finishes with Benediction with Deacon Bob at 6:30 pm. Stay for the 15 minutes of Adoration after one of the weekend Masses each weekend. Or maybe just spend some quiet time with the Lord. Schedule it and decide how much time you want to spend with the Lord and stick to it. Maybe you have developed some bad habits during the pandemic. Maybe this is a good time to let go of them. Maybe you are eating or drinking a little too much. Maybe you are spending too much time on social media or watching the news and that is just making you anxious. Maybe you are spending a little too much time with the people you are sheltering with and have fostered some bad feelings. Maybe it is time to let go of that. Maybe it is time to forgive or ask for forgiveness. Many people are hurting financially at this time. If you are doing well, maybe you can let go of some of the money. Participate in the Lenten Almsgiving Project here at church each week. If you know someone who is struggling financially, try and find a way to help them out. Stimulus checks will be coming from the government soon. If you do not need the money, give it to someone who does. If you are struggling financially, do something nice for someone that does not cost any money. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are the three pillars of Lent. Don't just do the same thing you do every year during Lent. Take it to prayer and pick something meaningful for you.