



A TOUCH OF MERCY

by Fr. Ogie Magbanua, SSP



Upon arrival at the Iloilo Airport last September 2020, I was fetched by the LGU and brought into a quarantine facility in an elementary school as part of the isolation procedure due to the CoViD-19 pandemic.

The classroom, which had well-arranged chairs, a single folding bed, a stand fan, and a comfort room, was my “home” for six days. It was not so bad at all. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner were brought on time outside the door. I read books, slept, watched the news on my cellphone at leisure. The isolation was a pleasant accommodation. After the swab

test’s negative result on the sixth day, I was brought home to finish the remaining eight days in my room and still in isolation with food brought outside my room at a designated time. I might have been isolated during those 14 days but not abandoned, quarantined but not forgotten, isolated but touched by love from those who took care of my needs.

On the contrary, isolation due to leprosy during Jesus’ time was a painful experience. Their sickness quarantined lepers. They were isolated by their family members. They were avoided by society. Untouched, unloved the lepers

were isolated from the community and even among themselves. They were doomed to live in isolation “outside the camp” due to their disease (Lv 13: 46). They could not work and earn their living. They could not be with their family. Begging and scavenging for food might, perhaps, be their only means to survive. The lepers were barely hanging on to life to survive. They were at the mercy of others, as reflected in the words of the leper to Jesus, “If you wish, you can make me clean” (Mk 1:40). “If you choose...”; “If you will...”; “If you want...”; a cry for help begging for sympathy from others. Jesus was moved with compassion, touched him, and healed him. The leper’s painful isolation ended by that particular touch of healing love.

Isolation in our lives is not painful at all, even during the pandemic. It is abandonment that hurts more than the physical distance. Sicknesses like leprosy, still roam around the globe. There must be a reason why God did not totally eradicate such illnesses in our lives: our ‘touch of mercy’ to others may also be tested as our means of redemption.

PASTORAL CATECHESIS FOR THE YEAR OF MISSION *AD GENTES*

Restoring Normalcy in the Church

Fr. James H. Kroeger, MM

The life of the Catholic Church suffered disastrously during the revolution years (1896-1898); it would be decades before a condition approximating “normalcy” would again be reached. From 1898 to 1900 there were almost no resident bishops; diocesan priests remained in very short supply; seminaries were closed in 1898 and did not reopen until 1904. From 1898 to 1903 the total number of friars decreased over 75% from 1,013 to 246. In a word, the Church was in chaos.

Meanwhile, the severe shortage of clergy and religious was met in part by new, non-Spanish missionary congregations of women and men from Europe, Australia, and America. For example, male missionary societies that responded to the

pressing needs in the 1905-1941 period are: Irish Redemptorists (1905), Mill Hill Missionaries (1906), Scheut-CICM (1907), Sacred Heart Missionaries and Divine Word Society (1908), LaSalle Brothers (1911), Oblates of Saint Joseph (1915), Maryknoll Missioners (1926), Columban Missioners (1929), Society of Saint Paul (1935), Quebec-PME Society (1937), and Oblates-OMI (1939). Many dedicated female religious came as missionaries to the Philippines, often working in partnership with the societies just mentioned.

By the mid-1920s, the situation was taking a turn for the better; some significant factors in the survival and resurgence of the Church were: the revitalization of Catholic education, growth of Filipino diocesan and religious vocations, a more educated laity, Church engagement in social questions, and the involvement of Catholics in national life.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 31 [30]:3–4)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P — The Lord be with you.
All — **And with your spirit.**

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.)

P — Today's Gospel presents the moving story of Jesus healing a leper. The healing declares that Jesus is the one who is to come, for when the Messiah comes, the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. The Messiah comes to inaugurate the year of the Lord's favor.

Jesus needs our words and our actions, our hands and our hearts, to continue to reach out today to the lonely, to alleviate pain, to bridge the gap that separates people. May this Eucharist strengthen us to become effective instruments of the Lord's healing love.

Penitential Act

P — Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

P — Have mercy on us, O Lord.

All — **For we have sinned against you.**

P — Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

All — **And grant us your salvation.**

P — May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All — **Amen.**

P — Lord, have mercy.

All — **Lord, have mercy.**

P — Christ, have mercy.

All — **Christ, have mercy.**

P — Lord, have mercy.

All — **Lord, have mercy.**

Gloria

All — **Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Collect

P — Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All — **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading

(Lv 13:1–2, 44–46) *(Sit)*

The passage from Leviticus describes how the Israelites dealt with a person stricken with leprosy. Their fear and abhorrence of this disease serve as the background for Jesus' encounter with a leper.

A reading from the Book of Leviticus

THE LORD said to Moses and

Aaron, "If someone has on his skin a scab or pustule or blotch which appears to be the sore of leprosy, he shall be brought to Aaron, the priest, or to one of the priests among his descendants. If the man is leprous and unclean, the priest shall declare him unclean by reason of the sore on his head.

"The one who bears the sore of leprosy shall keep his garments rent and his head bare, and shall muffle his beard; he shall cry out, 'Unclean, unclean!' As long as the sore is on him he shall declare himself unclean, since he is in fact unclean. He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp."

— The word of the Lord.

All — **Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 32)

R — **I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.**

San Jose

C
I turn to you, Lord,
G C F
in time of trouble and you fill me
C G7 C
with the joy of sal-va-tion.

1. Blessed is he whose fault is taken away,/ whose sin is covered./ Blessed the man to whom the LORD imputes not guilt,/ in whose spirit there is no guile. **(R)**

2. Then I acknowledged my sin to you,/ my guilt I covered not./ I said, "I confess my faults to the LORD,"/ and you took away the guilt of my sin. **(R)**

3. Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you just;/ exult, all you upright of heart. **(R)**

Second Reading

(1 Cor 10:31–11:1)

Paul reminds us Christians to be always mindful of God in our lives. Whatever we do must be done for God's glory.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Avoid giving offense, whether to the Jews or Greeks or the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in every way, not seeking my own benefit but that of the many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

— The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Lk 7:16) (Stand)

All — Alleluia, alleluia. A great prophet has arisen in our midst, God has visited his people. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Mk 1:40–45)

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark
All — Glory to you, O Lord.

A LEPER came to Jesus 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. Then, warning him sternly, he dismissed him at once.

He said to him, "See that you tell no one anything, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them."

The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter. He spread the report abroad so that it was impossible for Jesus to enter a town openly. He remained outside in deserted places,

and people kept coming to him from everywhere.

— The Gospel of the Lord.
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

All — I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (At the words that follow up to and including and became man, all bow.) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — We look to the Lord who gives, preserves, and saves life, as he did with the poor leper. May our loving Father give us a loving heart similar to his as we pray:

R — Lord of life, listen to our prayer.

C — May Pope Francis, bishops, priests, and deacons lead the flock with the compassionate heart of Jesus our Savior. We pray: **(R)**

C — May political and civil leaders move with compassion to the cries of those who are suffering because of racial and religious discrimination, violence and terrorism, and render to them justice and peace. We pray: **(R)**

C — May the Lord make us all his instruments to comfort those who suffer, to lift the spirit of the depressed, and to bring his love and hope to those broken in body and spirit. We pray: **(R)**

C — May our society never lose respect for human dignity and life. May we care for and defend the elderly, the sick, the poor, the disabled, the refugees, and children. We pray: **(R)**

C — May the Lord welcome our departed brothers and sisters into his kingdom where they will behold God face to face. We pray: **(R)**

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

P — God our Father, your Son Jesus Christ revealed how close you are to us, especially to those who suffer. Hear our prayers and give us joy and serenity as we continue to work for your kingdom.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.



Presentation of the Gifts (Stand)

P — Pray, brethren...
All — May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P — May this oblation, O Lord, we pray, cleanse and renew us and may it become for those who do your will the source of eternal reward.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Preface (*Ordinary VIII*)

P — The Lord be with you.

All — And with your spirit.

P — Lift up your hearts.

All — We lift them up to the Lord.

P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All — It is right and just.

P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For when your children were scattered afar by sin, through the Blood of your Son and the power of the Spirit, you gathered them again to yourself, that a people, formed as one by the unity of the Trinity, made the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, might, to the praise of your manifold wisdom, be manifest as the Church.

And so, in company with the choirs of Angels, we praise you, and with joy we proclaim:

All — Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. (Kneel)

Acclamation (*Stand*)

All — Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All — Our Father...

P — Deliver us, Lord...



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All — For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(*Kneel*)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. Ps 78 [77]: 29–30)

They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

Prayer after Communion

(*Stand*)

P — Let us pray. (*Pause*)

Having fed upon these heavenly delights, we pray, O Lord, that we may always long for that food by which we truly live.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.

All — And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P — Bow down for the blessing. (*Pause*)

May the God of all consolation order your days in his peace and grant you the gifts of his blessing.

All — Amen.

P — May he free you always from every distress and confirm your hearts in his love.

All — Amen.

P — So that on this life's journey you may be effective in good works, rich in the gifts of hope, faith, and charity, and may come happily to eternal life.

All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.