



# Christ in Our Neighborhood

## Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Prayer

Father, you heal us and gather us to Yourself. You do not leave us abandoned. Your desire is for us to be in communion with You. Heal us and restore us to that most perfect life with You and with Your Son and Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

### Commentary

#### 1st Reading: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46

Leviticus, at first glance, is just a book of boring laws and regulations. It is clearly a set of rules in order for God's people to get along and to live in harmony. However, it's still boring!

On the other hand, Leviticus can be read as a visible sign of a world of a perfect God who wants a perfect world for us. More than a few times, God says in Leviticus, "Be holy as I am Holy." This is God's desire.

Even as we reflect on the harsh words about the lepers who are ostracized in our First Reading this week, we get the idea that God's holy people are to be preserved from anything that is unclean or unholy. The idea is for heaven and earth to abide side by side.

However, it is hard for us to grasp this idea of a world of God where some are shunned and others are deemed holy. However, taken as a whole, we should remember that the Israelite people were a special race set apart by God for a purpose and that purpose had not been fully revealed yet.

It will be multiple generations before the full plan of our healing, restoration, and salvation is revealed. Of course, we believe that the fullness of that revelation is Christ Himself.

### Questions

How do you react when you don't understand God's plan?

### Commentary

#### 2nd Reading: 1 Cor 10:31—11:1

Our Christian faith reminds us that the fullness of revelation is Jesus Christ. He is the perfect revelation of God and His Kingdom. In and through Christ, and not by the law of Leviticus, we are finally healed, restored, and saved. In Christ, we can be Holy as God is Holy.

## Healed & Restored:

### Part 2 of 2

This is made especially clear in our Second Reading as St. Paul says, "Avoid giving offense, whether to the Jews or Greeks or the church of God."

Paul went to great lengths to show that Jesus, Lord of heaven and earth, was for all who chose to come to Him. It did not belong to a select or chosen few as we read in Leviticus. In Christ, no one is shunned. Rather, the Lord says to all, Jews and Greeks, lepers and cleansed, "come unto me."

### Question

Are there people who are shunned or regarded as unclean in your world?

Next, we will be celebrating the Season of Lent.

You are encouraged to open your home and invite a friend to break open Scripture throughout the season with  
*Christ in Our Neighborhood.*

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## Commentary

### Gospel: Mark 1:40-45

We conclude the First Chapter of the Gospel of Mark with the story of the leper. This ties in with our First Reading from Leviticus about the laws regarding leprosy.

This passage also follows examples of other healing accounts by Jesus earlier in the chapter. It is another “proof” of Jesus’ earlier testimony that the “Kingdom of God is at hand.” The Kingdom is now fully realized in Jesus.

It is interesting to note that, although the now cleansed leper is told to show himself to a priest, there is no mention of him doing it. In fact, the reading suggests that leaving Jesus’ sight, he immediately tells everyone about what had occurred.

The man disobeys Jesus’ command twice over. He doesn’t go to the priest and he blabs what he was told to be kept secret.

As a result, Jesus had to go into deserted places. Now that the previously shunned leper is restored and brought back into the public, the one who had worked the healing can no longer be seen in public.

This is only the beginning of how God in Christ will be forced out, shunned, ridiculed and even killed. But, this is all a part of God’s mysterious and hidden plan that will be fully revealed when He rises, ascends to His Father, and returns to us in glory.

## Question

In what way has the Lord been welcomed in your life?  
How do you shut Him out?

## This Week’s Task

Prepare yourself for Lent. Consider what you will offer up as a sacrifice during these forty days. What are you willing to give up during Lent in order to deepen your relationship with the Lord?

## Group Prayer

Pray the following:

Father,  
We do not always understand Your plan.

We place our hope in You and trust  
in Your mystery.

You are mystery. You are not a puzzle  
to be figured out. You are God and we  
are not.

Help us simply to abide in You as  
You abide with us.

Amen.

The prayer continues with Psalm 32

## Psalm

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

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

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

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you just;  
exult, all you upright of heart.

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

**Conclude with an Our Father**