

**SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 02/11/2024.**

**Readings: Leviticus 13:1- 2, 44 - 6; 1Cor. 10: 31 -11:1; Mk. 1: 40 - 45.**

**Theme: Being an insider or an outsider**

Some young people **long for the day they can “move out”**. When their eighteenth birthday arrives, they start making arrangements to get their own place. Often this occurs in situations in which parents and children have trouble communicating on very many things. Sound somewhat familiar? Right.... In these situations, the son or daughter begins to believe that the **grass is truly greener elsewhere**.

Today’s readings center around themes of being an insider or an outsider, being part of something or disconnected from it, being at home or living apart, being afflicted or being made whole. And this “**disconnection**” can occur for many reasons. One way people get driven to the margins, forced to “dwell apart” is because **that is where the rest of the community pushes them** and forces them to reside. We see that clearly in the first Reading from Leviticus in which we have an articulation of Jewish law regarding those who bear the sores of leprosy. As you well know, those afflicted with the disease were forced to try to somehow survive apart from the safety and support of the community.

What about us today? Do we drive people to the margins, so we don’t have to **help them, take care of them, embrace them, or understand them**. Whether it is the unwed mother, the person who has been in jail a couple of times, the child with a physical or mental disability, the person who lives on the street, the person struggling with an addiction, the person of another political party, the non - Christian...the list could go on and on.... each of us probably has some person or persons **we keep at a distance**.

And like Jesus in today’s Gospel passage, we are certainly called to do **all we can** to see to it that we engage those outside our comfort zones with loving, understanding, and welcoming hearts. Making sure they realize that **they belong** and are welcome to join the group, to be part of our own individual communities, to find a “home”, a **dwelling place among us**.

My friends, in the spiritual life, there will never come a time when we can make it through this life on our own. We will **always** need the One who is Life, the One who is Safety, the One who is Our Home. And when we choose to “dwell apart” through our disobedience, through our sin.... we don’t have to remain there. Like the leper in the Gospel story, we can be healed, we can be once again made whole, we can live **where we were created to live**...in God, with God, and for God.

**“If you wish, you can make me clean.”** May that be our prayer this day.