

***ctkAlive!* Scripture Study**  
**6th Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**2021—B Cycle**



*Jesus curing a leper*  
Sketch by [Rembrandt](#) (ca. 1660-1665)

*For your convenience and to broaden your benefit from this and all sessions in this series, you will find links to books, authors, and other references mentioned in the text.*

*Caution: Links to the internet are like rabbits dashing across a hunter's path. Instinct says, "Chase after that link!" Instead, we suggest waiting until you have followed the entire reflection. Then take all the time you wish to follow these interesting and educational links.*

*Exception: In the course of these reflections, you may have an opportunity to watch or listen to a relevant song or video.*

*Gender usage in writing: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.*

### **Opening Prayer**

*(edited for use here)*

### **Prayer for Health and Healing**

God of love,  
you are the only source of health and healing.  
In you there is calm and the only true peace in the universe.  
Grant me an awareness of your presence,  
and give me confidence in you.  
In all my pain and weariness and anxiety,  
teach me to yield myself to your never-failing care,  
knowing that your love and power surround me,  
trusting in your wisdom and providence  
to give to me and those I love . . . health . . .  
strength . . . and peace when your time is best.  
I pray this through Jesus Christ, my Lord.  
Amen.

Source: [Christianity.com](http://Christianity.com)

### **Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Readings**

Book of Leviticus 13: 1-2, 44-46 “The one who bears the sore of leprosy . . . shall cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean!’”

Psalms 32: 1-2, 5, 11 “I said, ‘I confess my faults to the Lord,’ and you took away the guilt of my sin.”

First Corinthians 10: 31 to 11: 1 “Be imitators of me as I am of Christ.”

Mark 1: 40-45 “A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said, ‘If you wish, you can make me clean.’”

### **A Reading from the Book of Leviticus (13: 1-2, 44-46)**

“Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, ‘If someone has a boil, an inflammation or a sore on his skin which could develop into [leprosy](#), he must be brought to Aaron the priest, or to one of the priests, his descendants. If, however, a reddish white sore appears on the top of his head or forehead, this means leprosy has broken out. The priest must examine it, and if he finds a reddish white swelling on the head or forehead, which looks like leprosy of the skin, this means that the man is leprous: he is unclean. The priest shall declare him unclean; he is suffering from leprosy of the head.’”

### **Personal Reflection**

Only Jewish priests could definitively diagnose leprosy among their population. Having made the diagnosis, they prescribed the required isolation. Priests also had responsibility for verifying cures and allowing lepers to return to their families. The community of believers prescribed sacrifices for the purification of lepers. According to common belief, one’s own personal sins caused leprosy to break out. A ritual of prescribed prayers and customs “transferred” the mysterious “sin.” This ritual called for the use of two birds. The priest killed one bird, symbolizing the death of the leper’s sin. The second bird flew away, symbolically carrying the sin far from the person and the rest of the community. Leprosy still exists, even [here](#) in the United States.

— *What spiritual, mental, social practices or metaphors am I aware of in modern Christian life that are similar to the ancient Jewish practice of “cleansing” a leper?*

### **Responsorial Psalm 32 (1-2, 5, 11)**

The joy of being forgiven.

*I turn to you, O God, in times of trouble,  
and you fill me with the joy of salvation.*

Blessed is the one whose sin is forgiven,  
whose iniquity is wiped away.

Blessed are those in whom Yahweh sees no guilt.  
and in whose spirit is found no deceit.  
*I turn to you, O God, in times of trouble,  
and you fill me with the joy of salvation.*

Then I made known to you my sin  
and uncovered before you my fault,  
saying to myself,  
*I turn to you, O God, in times of trouble,  
and you fill me with the joy of salvation.*

Rejoice in Yahweh and be glad,  
you who are upright;  
sing and shout for joy,  
you who are clean of heart.  
*I turn to you, O God, in times of trouble,  
and you fill me with the joy of salvation.*

Now listen to [Psalm 32](#) by the [Psalms Project](#), featuring Raelyn. (6 min)

### Personal Reflection

In our Catholic tradition, the psalmist reminds us of the power of the Sacrament of Penance and our personal call to live a life of repentance and reconciliation. These virtues restore sinners to a state of purity and wholesomeness as children of God. Sin signifies a wrong committed against someone we love or who needs our love. Our “wellbeing,” in the truest meaning of that word, depends on the quality of our own relationship with God and God’s creation. What sin has destroyed can only be restored by trusting in God, who pardons the humble and repentant spirit.

The responsorial refrain accompanying Psalm 32 says, “I turn to you, O God, in times of trouble, and you fill me with the joy of salvation.”

— *How closely does that refrain match my typical response when I face some kind of “trouble” (in the broadest sense)? If I do not “turn to God,” then what is my “turn to” response of choice, e.g., feeling sorry for myself, blaming someone else for my trouble, even turning to alcohol or some form of narcotic, etc.?*

— *when someone tells me, “You hurt my feelings,” when I don’t think I did? And how do I respond when I do remember saying hurtful words?*

“I made known to you my sin and uncovered before you my fault.”

— *How hard is it for me to offer a sincere, “I’m sorry,” when I have caused physical, emotional, or spiritual harm to someone?” Why is it so difficult? How can I change that negative response?*

**From the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (10: 31 to 11: 1)**

“Whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do it for the glory of God. Give no offense to the Jews or to the Greeks, or to the Church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything. I do not seek my own interest, but that of many: that they be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

### Personal Reflection

In the First Century A.D/CE, Jewish converts to Christ comprised a tiny minority among mainstream (orthodox) Jews. Even less among the greater Greek population (Greek meaning “Gentile/non-Jewish”). Though often offended by these groups, Paul set an example of returning hatred with love. He expected his converts to do the same—no matter what. Though Saul of Tarsus (later Paul) hated Christians in his early life, he learned mercy directly from Jesus. The idea of a boastful, abusing Christian went contrary to Paul’s post-conversion example and teaching.

“Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.”

— *What areas in my daily living spotlight a personal weakness in how I respond to and deal with in-coming abuse (of any sort)?*

— *In what situations do I find myself tempted to fight back “in kind,” when I stand on the receiving end of verbal abuse? What are the pros (if any) and cons of my behavior?*

### **Proclamation from the Gospel according to Mark (1: 40-45)**

“A leper came to Jesus and begged him, ‘If you want to, you can make me clean.’

“Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, ‘I do want to. Be clean.’ “The leprosy left the man at once, and he was made clean.

“As Jesus sent the man away, he sternly warned him, ‘Don’t tell anyone about this, but go and show yourself to the priest; and for the cleansing, bring the offering ordered by Moses. In this way, you will give them your testimony.’

“However, as soon as the man went out, he began spreading the news everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter any town. But even though he stayed in the rural areas, people came to him from everywhere.”

### Personal Reflection

“A leper came to Jesus, begging on his knees, ‘If you want to, you can cleanse me.’ Deeply moved, Jesus put out his hand, touched him and said, ‘I want to. Be clean. Then and there the leprosy was gone, his skin smooth and healthy.”

— from *The Message* (Catholic Edition), a contemporary translation of the Bible by the late Rev. Dr. Eugene H. Peterson, Presbyterian minister, Scripture scholar, theologian, author, and poet

— *What kind of God do I find in this text?*

— *What message does this gospel event have for me today, especially regarding areas of my life that need change (for the better)?*

— *If I were to rewrite the leper's opening statement to Jesus, how would I put it in reference to myself? Write it here: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (or in your journal).*

## **The Week Ahead**

“In his book, [The Mountain Road](#), [Theodore H. White](#) says, if you place pure gold next to pure silver, flecks of gold will embed themselves in the silver and vice versa. What happens to metal happens to people, also. When people are put in close contact, flecks of their character and values cross over and embed themselves in the other. The crossover can be for good or evil.”

– [Mission: Praying Scripture in a Contemplative Way \(Year B\)](#) by [Mark Link, S.J.](#)

(Note: out of print.)

— *How has Jesus “crossed over” into my life, perhaps in a new way during the past year's shelter-in-place requirement? Can I think of any way my attitude, way of life, beliefs, and hope have “crossed over” into other members of my personal “bubble”?*

In these Covid times, we look for any kind of relief the calendar can give us. This coming Sunday, we celebrate (Saint) Valentine's Day, followed shortly by Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lenten Season. Though my options may be greatly reduced, what can I do to bring even an ounce more love into my closest relationships?



## **Journaling Prompts**

— *What personal message or inspiration did I take away from today's Scriptures? How will this help me face my life-challenges during the coming week?*

— *Based on this week's readings, what is God asking me to do regarding  
(1) the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships and  
(2) my life as Christ's emissary to bring his values and grace to the people I interact with at home and at a distance via social media?*

— *Who needs to get a call, email, or text from me expressing my love and offering a moment of laughter and personal care?*

Take some time to write about your experience and feelings regarding the events occurring in your life and in our country.

## **For Inspirational Viewing**

### Video:

Bishop Robert Barron on the meaning and “mechanics” of miracles:

[“What is a Miracle”](#) (3.5 min.)

— What, if anything, bothers you about his definition of “miracle”?

[Catholicism in Focus](#) presents [“What is a Miracle?”](#) featuring Casey, a Franciscan Brother (7 min)

## **Preview of Next Week’s Scriptures**

First Sunday of Lent

Genesis 9: 8-15 “I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”

Psalms 25: 4-10 “Your ways, O Lord, make known to me.”

First Peter 3: 18-22 “Christ suffered for sins once . . . that he might lead you to God.”

Mark 1: 12-15 “This is the time of fulfillment . . . repent and believe in the Gospel.”

## **Closing Prayer**

“Realization of our oneness in Christ is the only cure for human loneliness . . . .

It is the only ultimate meaning of life, the only thing that gives meaning and purpose to every life.”

— [Caryll Houselander](#), quoted in [Caryll Houselander: Essential Writings](#) by [Wendy M. Wright](#)

Houselander’s spirituality echoes the words and images of [St. Teresa of Avila’s](#) prayer, “Christ Has No Body Now but Yours” . . . (*edited for use here*)

Suggestion: Relax and listen or sing along to John Michael Talbot’s meditative rendition of [St. Teresa’s prayer](#). As you sing/pray, substitute “mine” for “yours.”

Christ has no body now but mine.

no hands, no feet, on the earth but mine,

Mine are the eyes through which he looks compassion into the world.

Mine are the feet with which he walks to do good.

Mine are the hands with which Christ blesses all the world.

I am his body.

Amen.

**Questions?**

Send any questions or comments you might have to [algarrotto@comcast.net](mailto:algarrotto@comcast.net)

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(follow this link to my spiritual novel, [Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words](#))