

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Soon after he became the Holy Father, Pope Francis mentioned that he sees “the Church as a field hospital after battle.” We know from our own personal experiences and statistics related to addiction that we are all wounded and in need of healing. Thus, rather than serving as a dispatcher and handing off the vulnerable, the Catholic Church is to be a beacon of light to anyone seeking to make difficult changes and transformations.

Showing up to be part of a recovery fellowship helps us grow while providing a place for others to come find new life and perspectives. By doing so, we open the doors of the Church to share the saving grace of Jesus Christ. This is not an act that keeps the wonders of Jesus focused inward, but instead one that invites our Lord to enter the world for all to be awoken.

The readings from this Sunday’s Mass emphasize a change from the old ways of dealing with uncleanness and sin. The First Reading details what was to be done with a leper:

*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 good news is that Jesus changes the way we treat those with unclean spirits. He heals them. Hear the faith expressed in this Sunday's Gospel Reading:

*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.*

It would suit us well to approach Jesus with the same kind of faith. When we work the Second Step, we are asked to come to believe that God can restore us to sanity. Motivated by the findings of a thorough First Step, we put our faith in Him and seek to do His will.

This is the movement of the Church—to make disciples of all nations, healing in the name of Jesus Christ and proclaiming the gospel. When we remain too inward-focused as a Christian community, we lose the essence of our mission.

Pope Francis calls for a radical re-imagining of how the local church can serve as a field hospital while inviting us to show concern for the wounded. This is how recovery works—by leaning on each other to share hope and considering the needs of those who need help.

Last week, Saint Paul challenged us to become weak to serve the weak. To do this, we simply share what it was like for us, what happened, and what life is like now. We can speak with authority when offering our experience, strength, and hope. Recalling the past is different than dwelling on the past. The former brings connection with the newcomer and keeps the memory of our deliverance fresh. The latter keeps us stuck in shame and discounts what God can and will do.

If you are wounded, seek help. If you've been helped, seek the wounded.

Reflection Questions

- Reflect upon and describe your experience of the Catholic Church serving as a field hospital after battle.
- How do you relate to the desperate plea of a leper speaking to Jesus in this Sunday's Gospel Reading?
- What are you doing to answer the call of discipleship and the imperative to share the hope of recovery with others?

40 Meetings in 40 Days Challenge

Establish or renew a foundation for recovery and develop healthy spiritual practices this Lent!

- The 40 Meetings in 40 Days Challenge is an invitation to grow closer to Jesus Christ and renew your commitment to recovery this Lent
- Commit to attending a recovery meeting every day for 40 days and engage daily spiritual routines
- Challenge begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14
- For more information and to register visit **catholicinrecovery.com/40daychallenge**

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

Gospel: Mark 1:40-45