

Kids' Chronicle

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1994 VOLUME III, ISSUE NO. 3 BY JOE SARNICOLA

Jesus cures a man with leprosy

The Lord gave Moses explicit instructions on how to examine an Israelite who may have a serious skin disease, especially leprosy.

The sick person was to be brought before the priest, who could sometimes tell right away whether the skin condition was serious or just some minor infection. If there was any doubt, the priest would order the person into isolation for seven days, after which there would be another examination.

If the sick person was found to have a serious disease, he would have to live away from everyone else. Some diseases were highly contagious, and there were no cures for them. To draw attention to themselves, the sick people had to wear tattered clothes and keep a veil over their mouths and cry, "Unclean, unclean!" whenever anyone else came near them.

If the skin condition cleared, the person had the right to be reexamined by a priest. A separate cleansing ritual had to be followed before the person was allowed to rejoin the community.

More than a thousand years after the Lord gave the laws and rituals to Moses, Jesus met a man with leprosy. The man's clothes were little more than dirty rags and the veil over his mouth could not cover all the sores on his face. "Unclean, unclean!" he cried as he walked away from Jesus.

But then the man stopped and looked at Jesus. "Are you the one called Jesus? The man who heals the

sick and raises the dead?"

"I am Jesus."

The man ran to Jesus, knelt at his feet, and cried into his robe. "I know that if you want to you can heal me and make me clean again."

Jesus looked down and was filled with compassion for the sick man. He put his hand on the man's shoulder and said, "Of course I want to heal you. Stand up and be clean."

Immediately, the man was cured.

The man jumped about shouting and praising God. Jesus said to him, "Please do not tell anyone about what has happened. Present yourself to a priest and follow all the rules that were established by Moses."

But the man was too excited, and could not keep his promise to Jesus. He told everyone he met that it was Jesus who had healed him. As a result, everywhere Jesus went, he was followed by huge crowds of people.

Even if Jesus managed to hide for a



Illustration by Kathy Welsh

short time in deserted places, when he came out people immediately recognized him and crowds again formed around him.

READ MORE ABOUT IT: Leviticus 13:44-46; Mark 1:40-45.

Q&A

1. What people were able to examine the sick?
2. What happened after Jesus healed the sick man?

Bible Accent

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, which is the 40-day period of preparation before Easter. On this day, Catholics stand before a priest who makes the sign of the cross on their foreheads with ashes. The ashes were made from the burning of the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday. The priest usually says, "From dust you have come, to dust you will return."

The church proclaims fasting on the Fridays of Lent, and considers the entire period a time to remember the suffering of Jesus. Jesus spent 40 days fasting and praying in the wilderness, and observing Lent is one way we can follow his example.

The Sunday before Easter is called Palm Sunday, in memory of how the Jews laid palms in the road as Jesus rode into Jerusalem. The Friday before Easter is called Good Friday, the day we remember the death of Jesus on the cross. This year, Ash Wednesday is February 16 and Easter is April 3.

Saint Valentine

Saint Valentine was a priest who lived in Rome three hundred years after Jesus. Emperor Claudius II outlawed marriage because he felt married soldiers would rather be home with their families than fight his battles. He wanted his army to be strong and always ready to fight.

Valentine was a compassionate person and secretly continued to perform weddings. When Claudius found out about this, he ordered the execution of the priest.

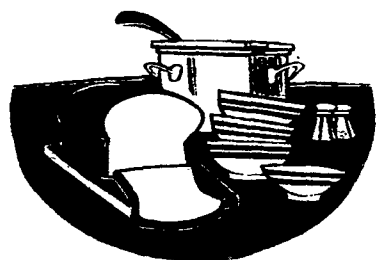
St. Valentine's death took place on the first day of the festival of Lupercalia, on which boys drew the names of girls who would be their partners for the celebration. Christians were often treated cruelly as part of the entertainment. We remember St. Valentine with love on February 14.



Fill in the blanks

Using the clues, fill in the blanks. The first letters of the words come from the word "fasting." Answers on page 7.

- F** -----, hope and love. (1 Cor. 13)
A -- Wednesday
S ----- First Christian martyr (Acts 7)
T way, -----, and life. (John 14)
I ----- Fragrant when it burns.
N Jesus of ----- (John 1)
G ----- Skull place (Matthew 27)



Kids' Club

You can win a \$50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) that answers this question:

Why is fasting so important during Lent?

Send your essay — including your name, home address, telephone number, school and grade — to Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Deadline for entries is February 24, 1994. The winner will be notified by phone and receive the savings bond by mail. In addition, the winner's essay will be published in an upcoming issue of *Kids' Chronicle*.

Last month's winner was Adam Furano, a fifth-grade student at St. Patrick's School in Seneca Falls. In response to the question "If Jesus were looking for a disciple today, how would you convince him that you'd be a good choice?" He wrote:

If Jesus were looking for disciples I would be a good choice because I pray to him for help and thanks. I also pray mostly to St. Jude and St. Anthony. I always stick to my beliefs. If there's a new kid coming into school I try to help him or her to fit in. I try to be a good friend to everyone. I try to do my best in school and in my sports practices. I pray in church as much as I can. I share my things with other people. Because I do all these things I think I would be a good disciple of God.



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