

# God's grace based on need

**6th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Feb. 16): (R3) Mark 1:40-45; (R1) Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46; (R2) 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1.**

A man with leprosy came to Jesus and begged him on his knees, "If you will to do so, you can cure me." Filled with compassion, Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said: "I do will it. Be cured." Do we realize how remarkable that simple act was? Hebrew law required that no one touch a leper. Undoubtedly, this man had gone for many years without the simplest human contact. Years without being touched!

Studies show that babies who are not touched may die. Experts tell us that infants need to be held a lot. They have a basic need for physical warmth.

Ugandan infants are almost constantly held by their mothers. They go everywhere with their mothers. The physical contact with the mother and the constant movement seemed to the factors that propelled these infants to maturity beyond Western standards.

Many young parents today understand this principle and make it a practice to massage their infants. That is a wise practice. We all have a need to be touched. Jesus could have healed the leper simply by speaking, but he reached out and touched him, too. He knew that was exactly what this man needed.

This incident shows us that Jesus gives us individually what we really need. The leper needed to be touched. The man with paralysis needed to hear Jesus say, "Your sins are forgiven." The blind man needed to have Jesus apply moist clay to his eyes. Grace is communicated to different people in different ways.

Two angels stopped to spend a night in the home of a wealthy family. The family was rude and refused to let the angels stay in the mansion's guest room. Instead the angels were



Father **Albert Shamon**

## A word for Sunday

given a space in the cold basement. As they made their bed on the hard floor, the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it. When the younger angel asked why, the older angel replied, "Things aren't always what they seem."

The next night the pair came to rest at the house of a very poor, but very hospitable, farmer and his wife. After sharing what little food they had, the couple let the angels sleep in their bed where they could have a good night's rest. When the sun came up the next morning, the angel found the farmer and his wife in tears. Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole income, lay dead in the field. The younger angel was infuriated and asked the older angel, "How could you have let this happen! The first man had everything, yet you helped him. The second family had little but was willing to share everything, and you let their cow die." "Things aren't always what they seem," the older angel replied. "When we stayed in the basement of the mansion, I noticed there was gold stored in that hole in the wall. Since the owner was so obsessed with greed and unwilling to share his good fortune, I sealed the wall so he wouldn't find it. Then last night as we slept in the farmer's bed, the angel of death came for his wife. I told him to take the cow instead."

Things are not always what they

seem. To the world's eyes, life is often patently unfair. Good people suffer, whereas horrendous people go through life unscathed. But through the eyes of faith, we say confidently that God grants to each what he or she needs. This world is not the final commentary on God's will or God's purpose. There is an unseen hand at work in our lives. We must trust.

Christ is willing to meet our every need. Our need is to trust him. Medical science was completely unable to treat leprosy in Jesus' day, but he healed the leper. In the same way, God can heal us from the leprosy of sin; he can restore us, giving us not just life, but abundant life.

But like the leper, we need to go to Jesus and acknowledge his power. Our greatest need is to trust him in all things, to make him king of our lives.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

## Daily Readings

**Monday, February 17**  
Genesis 4:1-15, 25; Psalms 50:1-8, 16; Mark 8:17-20, 21  
Mark 8:11-13

**Tuesday, February 18**  
Genesis 6:5-8, 7:1-5  
Psalms 29:1A, 2, 3A; Mark 8:14-21

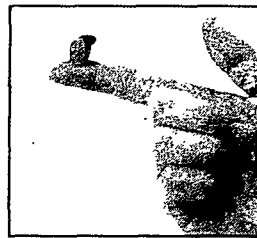
**Wednesday, February 19**  
Genesis 8:6-12, 20-22; Psalms 116:1-2, 15, 16, 19  
Mark 8:22-26

**Thursday, February 20**  
Genesis 9:1-13; Psalms 102:16-18, 19, 23, 29; Mark 8:27-33

**Friday, February 21**  
Genesis 11:1-9; Psalms 63:10-15; Mark 8:34-9:1

**Saturday, February 22**  
1 Peter 5:1-4; Psalms 23:1-6  
Matthew 16:13-19

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