

The Church, the Body of Christ, Reaches Out – 2

Before you begin, please pause for prayer, silent or verbalized, asking God to guide your reflection and that of the group for the following study...

Directions:

1. **Ask one person to read the following text slowly as the rest follow along.**
2. **In a couple of minutes of silent reflecting, each participant should be listening for what the Holy Spirit might be saying to them, is there a phrase, a verse, a question, or an idea that is striking you as interesting or important? Underline it.**
3. **Ask another person to read the passage again and repeat step 2.**
4. **Then begin the discussion with the questions below...**

Mark 1:40-45 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

⁴⁰ Jesus ^[a]cleanses a leper, begging him, and kneeling ^[b] he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." ⁴¹ Moved with pity, ^[c] Jesus ^[d] stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" ⁴² Immediately the leprosy ^[e] left him, and he was made clean. ⁴³ After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, ⁴⁴ saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." ⁴⁵ But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus ^[f] could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

Exploring the Passage:

1. What does the Holy Spirit seem to be saying to you as a result of reading and listening to this story?

2. Ask one of your group to tell the story again in his or her own words. What did you notice this time in the retelling?

3. What does this account teach us about Jesus/God?

(Over...>>)

4. Why might it be important that Jesus touched the leper and did not just pronounce him clean from a safe distance?

5. St. Paul often refers to the Church as the Body of Christ with Jesus as the Head. If the Jesus in the story is a portrayal of the church, who is the hand of Christ reaching out to touch the need?

6. Who, in the congregation? Who in the community? What needs in the community need the touch of Christ?

7. There is a little bit of the leper, the person in need in all of us? What might this text be inviting you to pray for, the need in your life or in the congregation?

8. In a couple of moments of silence, ask: "What is the Holy Spirit seeming to say to me now?"