

WHERE ARE OUR LEPERS? 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46
Psalm 32: :1-2, 3-4, 5-6
1 Corinthians 10: 31-11:1
Mark 1:40-45

To be labeled a leper in Jesus' day was to be demoted to the status of a non-person. Lepers were exiled physically, socially, and religiously from the community. In the public's eye they no longer existed – not even to God.

When Jesus touches the leper he renders himself as unclean and as unwelcome as they. This does not stop him, however, for his compassion impels him to see beyond the labels imposed upon them. These are not “lepers” calling out for healing; they are children of God – his brothers and sisters – begging to be acknowledged.

It is the ability to see the innate dignity and value of each person that moves Jesus to reach out to all of the outcasts of his day. No one is to be excluded from the Kingdom, and therefore no one is to be dismissed here on earth by those who call themselves God's people.

Jesus' compassion also stops him from making facile judgments and condemnations of others. He does not shun sinners, for example. He does not withhold affection or esteem from them until they reform. Rather, he pours out his love upon them, for not even sin can strip them of their dignity or render them less precious in his eyes.

In contrast to Jesus, we are often all too ready to condemn or reject or belittle. We consider some to be less worthy of our esteem, and we treat them as such. We neglect to see their innate dignity, and we treat them accordingly.

Failure to see the other as a precious and unique child of God permits bigotry and prejudice. It opens the door to practices such as torture, murder, and abortion. It prevents us from noticing that capital punishment and inhuman incarceration are contrary to God's ways. Anyone or any practice that fails to respect the innate dignity of each human life is an offense to the other and to God.

All around us, those who are downtrodden, dismissed, ignored, or disrespected call out for acknowledgement. They are our lepers. But more to the point, they are beloved children of God. And it is Jesus' will that their dignity be recognized.

Stephen J. Sauer, S.J.
Pastor

MARDI GRAS SCHEDULE

Saturday, February 21: 8:00 a.m. & 4:00 p.m. Vigil
Sunday, February 22: 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. (No 7:30 p.m. Mass due to parade)
Monday, February 23: 7:30 a.m. (No Noon Mass or Confessions)

Mardi Gras Day, February 24: Church & Office Closed (No Masses or Confessions)

Ash Wednesday, February 25: 7:30 a.m., Noon & 5:15 p.m.
Ashes will also be distributed at 11:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m. following Liturgies of the Word.

LENTEN DAY OF REFLECTION

On Tuesday, **March 10**, the parish will sponsor a **Lenten Day of Reflection** at Manresa Retreat House in Convent, Louisiana. The retreat will be led by Fr. Sauer for both men and women. A chartered bus, with a capacity of 48 persons, will depart from Immaculate Conception at 8:30 AM and will return by 4:30 PM. An offering of \$40 is requested to cover the cost of food and travel, but no one will be excluded for inability to pay. Please call Mary Kay Zahn (376-5095) if you are interested.

St. Joseph's Altar & Mass

The parish St. Joseph altar will be erected on **March 12** at the side altar of St. Joseph and St. Ann and will remain in place until the feast of St. Joseph on **March 19**. Parishoners are invited to place petitions and special tokens of remembrance at the altar throughout the week. On **March 19, following the Noon Mass**, lunch will be served in Lenex Hall.

7th Annual Good Shepherd School Golf Tournament

Monday, March 16, Stonebridge Golf Club of New Orleans in Gretna will host this annual tournament. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. with a tee time of 10:00 a.m. Please plan to attend a great day of golf with food from New Orleans' finest restaurants, a fabulous auction and a post-tournament cocktail party. For more information or to register, please call David Nusloch at (504) 598-9399. The Good Shepherd School provides an excellent, tuition-free education in a safe and loving environment to at-risk children in grades K-7th who come from families living in poverty.

4th Annual Harry Tompson Center Gala & Auction

Saturday, April 4, the Student Commons of Jesuit High School will be the venue for this year's Gala, "Harry Tompson Center Goes to the Academy Awards". This Gala and Auction are the primary fund raiser for the homeless center and provides almost a third of the funds required for operating expenses. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor of the Gala, please contact Suzette Herpich (296-6698) or Indie McKay (430-4935) for further details.

INDIVIDUALLY DIRECTED RETREATS AT GRAND COTEAU

Anyone interested in making a 3, 5, or 8-day individually directed retreat at the Jesuit Spirituality Center in Grand Coteau, Louisiana should consult jesuitspiritualitycenter.org or call (337) 662-5251 for further details. Retreat dates are: **Feb 9-18, Mar 2-11, and Mar 16-25.**

PRESIDER SCHEDULE**Saturday, February 14**

4:00 p.m. Fr. Fran Pistorius, S.J.

Sunday, February 15

8:00 a.m. Fr. Paul Osterle, S.J.
 9:30 a.m. Fr. Stephen Sauer, S.J.
 11:00 a.m. Fr. Tom Greene, S.J.
 7:30 p.m. Fr. Kevin Wildes, S.J.

Saturday, February 21

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Sunday, February 22

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 9:30 a.m. Fr. Stephen Sauer, S.J.
 11:00 a.m. Fr. Fran Pistorius, S.J.
 7:30 p.m. Fr. Stephen Sauer, S.J.

PRAYER LIST

Anne Accardo
 Lourdes Armbruster
 Sea Barry
 Musette Mary Buckley
 Ed Burks
 Kelsey Favrot
 Rosealie Foster
 Gina Gauthreaux
 Maggie Hebert
 Juliann Kiefer
 Tara Stoulig Monistere
 Beverly Morris
 Karen Oxmann
 Darlene Peters
 Desmond Peters
 Marie Pizzuto
 Wescoat Sandlin
 Betty Smith
 Jim Taylor
 Justin Webb
 Whitney Welsh
 Keri White

Please contact the parish office if you would like to add someone to our prayer list.

WEDDING BANNS**February 28, 2009**

Katie Gonsoulin & Adam Pelliccio

March 7, 2009

Nina Singh & Kristen Radcliff
 Melissa Montz & Daniel Donahoe

PARISH SOCIAL/DINNER

The February social and dinner this week is being sponsored by the Schiaffino, Carriere, and DeMatteo families.

MASS INTENTIONS**Tuesday, February 10**

7:30 a.m. The Paisant Family
 Noon James Falco

Wednesday, February 11

7:30 a.m. Mary Christina Dewhirst
 Noon Cyril Geary

Thursday, February 12

7:30 a.m. Rudolph P. Hamaker
 Noon Deceased Members of Sigma Alpha Kappa

Friday, February 13

7:30 a.m. Jerome A. Sauer
 Noon Robert Salvador Gilberti

Saturday, February 14

4:00 p.m. Sandra Bourg,
 Joseph B. Brechtel, Ronald
 Dewhirst, Morel Miller Elmer, Jr.,
 Denise & Bill Hoffman, and
 Charles Wall

Sunday, February 15

8:00 a.m. Lucille Yenni
 9:30 a.m. *Missa pro populo*
 7:30 p.m. Gwen Cooney Melancon, Kirk
 Paul Melancon, Jerome A.
 Sauer, and Lucille Yenni