

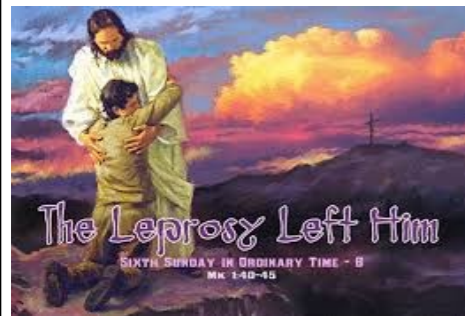


**The Parish of St Matthew's North Fawkner**  
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**Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time – February 14, 2021 Year B**



**MIRACLE STORY**

Awareness of this biblical background greatly strengthens the impact of the miracle story told in the Gospel (Mark 1:40-45). The leper, who of course is not supposed to approach anyone, feels emboldened to come up to Jesus. His plea, 'If you want to (the NRSV rendering "choose" is too weak), you can make me clean', is already a strong act of faith in the power and status of Jesus. With leprosy considered a living death, curing it was tantamount to raising the dead. The man believes that to approach Jesus is to access the life - giving power of God.

Jesus' response (v 41) 'moved with pity' translates a Greek word (splanchnistheis) that literally means 'moved to the depths of one's being' (the Greek plural splanchna refers to the lower abdominal organs). By stretching out his hand and touching the leper Jesus reaches right across the 'clean/unclean' barrier in all its physical, social and moral dimensions. The gesture and declaration, 'I do so choose', expresses the divine compassion reaching out to afflicted humanity. The verbal command, 'Be made clean', would have effected the cure. But, in a way that foreshadows the sacramental economy of the Church, Jesus wants the man to feel physically in his hitherto repulsive flesh the divine compassion and acceptance.

In the conventional understanding of the time, breaking across the 'clean/unclean' barrier would have exposed Jesus to contracting 'uncleanness' from the afflicted person. But for Jesus the 'clean/unclean' process works the opposite way: uncleanness does not flow from the man to Jesus; 'cleanness' flows from Jesus to the man. 'Uncleanness', for Jesus, is not something human beings 'catch' like a contagious disease from physical objects or conditions. 'Uncleanness' is a moral condition and has to do with the dispositions – good or evil – of the human heart (cf. Mark 7:14-23). True 'cleanness' or holiness is something human beings 'catch' by coming close to God, which is precisely what this man has achieved by having the faith, in his condition, to approach Jesus. (Fr Brendan Byrne SJ)

**Joke of the week**

A pastor had a dread of getting leprosy. He had read that the early signs are loss of feeling in the limbs, and was always pinching his legs, and if it hurt, he was reassured. On one occasion at a dinner with the parishioners he reached under the table and pinched his leg. He couldn't feel a thing. He pinched it again – harder this time. Still no sensation. The pastor visibly blanched and blurted out, "Oh, no! I've got leprosy!" A young lady sitting next to him asked: "But how do you know?" "Well, one of the early signs is loss of feeling in the leg. I've just pinched my leg twice and I didn't feel a thing!" The young lady remarked, "It was my leg you were pinching, pastor." (<http://frtonyshomilies.com/>)

*The sick in our parish: Teresa & Con Lamonaca, Nola, Judiel Teodoro, John Markis, Kathy Romanow, Leanne Branchflower, Carmela Bovezza, Giovanna Gamberale, Elda Taranto, Maurizzio Pierazzi, Vanessa Borg, Panfilo Ambrosini, Carmela Renda, Krys Herrmann*

*Recently deceased: Wladyslaw Stopa, Rosa Lattanzio, Peppino Amoroso, Antonio Francione, Lisa Toatoa, Doris Sorrentino, Valerie Weaver, Alex Henderson, David Morrison, Tom Moore*

*We pray for all those whose Anniversaries occur at this time: Elena Mariani, Fred Peake, Sebastiano Barresi, Laura Della Valle, Jonas Montealegre, Di Camillo Family, Rocco Liberato, Margaret Verzin, Youssef Nagebie Lebnan, Christopher Robinson, Filippo Orifici, Antonio Comito, Rita Vaina, Shanie Liyanage, Joyce De Silva, Mille Weerasinghe, Sherine Adolphus*

*We especially pray for all the deceased whose names are on the Church pews & the Resurrection Chapel.*

**Confessions**

Confessions are now available by appointment at the Parish on Saturday nights—before the Vigil Mass (5.30 pm). Please contact the Parish Centre on 93592369

**Mass times**

**Weekday:**  
 Tuesday-Friday 9.30 am  
 Novena mass: Wednesday 7.00 pm  
**Weekend:**  
 Saturday Vigil mass 6.00 pm  
 Sunday 9.00 am ; 10.30 (Italian mass)

**Prayers for intentions**

Parishioners wishing to have prayers for loved ones at Sunday masses should leave an envelope with the details of your intentions (recently deceased, sick, or, anniversaries). The envelopes should be placed in the letterbox outside the presbytery by Thursday afternoon.

**Rosters for weekend masses Feb 20/21:**

**Lectors:**  
 Saturday 6.00 pm : J. Butera  
 Sunday 9.00 am : S. Peake  
**Bus drivers:**  
 Saturday 6.00 pm : J. Butera

**Saint Valentine**

Saint Valentine, officially known as Saint Valentine of Rome, is a third-century Roman saint widely celebrated on February 14 and commonly associated with "courtly love." Although not much of St. Valentine's life is reliably known, and whether or not the stories involve two different saints by the same name is also not officially decided, it is highly agreed that St. Valentine was martyred and then buried on the Via Flaminia to the north of Rome. In 1969, the Roman Catholic Church removed St. Valentine from the General Roman Calendar, because so little is known about him. However, the church still recognizes him as a saint, listing him in the February 14 spot of Roman Martyrology. ([catholic.org](http://catholic.org))

The electronic version of the Parish bulletin is available on the Parish website @ <http://stmatthewsparish.org.au/>