

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

A priest was walking down the street when he came upon a group of about a dozen boys, all of them between 10 and 12 years of age. The group surrounded a dog. Concerned lest the boys were hurting the dog, he went over and asked "What are you doing with that dog?" One of the boys replied, "This dog is just an old neighborhood stray. We all want him, but only one of us can take him home. So we've decided that whichever one of us can tell the biggest lie will get to keep the dog." Of course, the priest was taken aback. "You boys shouldn't be having a contest telling lies!" he exclaimed. He then launched into a ten-minute sermon against lying, beginning, "Don't you boys know it's a sin to lie?" and ending with, "Why, when I was your age, I never told a lie." There was dead silence for about a minute. Then the smallest boy gave a deep sigh and said, "All right, give him the dog."

Dear friends,

We all know that there is a sacrament called 'Anointing of the sick'. In other words, it is called sacrament of healing. We are healed spiritually when we receive this sacrament. How many times do we realize that this sacrament heals the person?

Today's readings tell us the spiritual healing that witnessed by the community. In the first reading from the book of Leviticus, we learned that the social isolation was recognized and quarantined for a period of time. Science has proved that God's power heals the person besides all the sciences can give. The first reading gives the picture of the code of conduct during the old testament time. The leprosy was not looked at as a disease, rather it was looked at as a sin. Whoever got it was considered unfaithful, impure and unholy. Holiness of the people are expected as God is holy. So any form of visible abnormalities was considered as sin.

In the Gospel, Jesus heals the leper with compassion and forgiveness. He did this upon his request. Prayer is the biggest tool for spiritual healing. Prayer works. It may not work as we think or as the gospel tells. Sometimes we think that prayers should be answered or miracles to happen right away. Prayer works mysteriously. We can't control the outcome of it. We need to keep praying. Jesus tells us the same.

Spiritual healing takes place with God's compassion. It is a cooperation between us and God. God is ready to encounter us when we approach him. It is a divine intervention to the person who is seeking. In the Gospel today we read that the leper came to Jesus. He was requesting Jesus to make him clean. It was his confession of faith. Jesus wished him heal. Both happened immediately. He touched him and healed him completely. It was the

leper's faith that launches the relationship with Jesus, who responds in mercy with love and hope. Sometimes it takes time. In some cases, we take time to go to Jesus.

When we talk about spiritual healing, God heals the wounds of the person inside first. Most of the demonic forces looked at as evils which makes wounds in our souls. Jesus heals the wounds of the souls. On some occasions, God may use illness for a purpose we do not understand. On other occasions, God may intervene directly and on still other occasions, God may work through others, especially health care professionals.

Let us keep praying like the leper, "lord, if you wish make me clean." Evangelization becomes new after we know we have been healed. That's why he spread the news everywhere. Let us pray that the wounds of all are healed.