

JANUARY 7, 2022
Memorial of St. Andre Bessette, Religious
& Patron of Family Caregivers
Luke 5: 12-16

“PLEASE, LORD!”

We are all facing different variants of covid nowadays. People of all walks of life experience difficulties in battling the pandemic. Sickness, fear, and anxiety engulf our lives and the world. In this challenging time, what lesson we can get from our gospel for today? What is the message of Jesus to us? And how will St. Andre Bessette, the Patron of Family Caregivers, give us to reflect on?

Without proper knowledge and scientific research, the ancient world feared leprosy, one of the contagious diseases during that time. People considered leper ‘a very dangerous person.’ As a consequence, they were social outcast, avoided and rejected by all people. They always warned those people around them of their presence to have a clear distance away from them. But the confidence and faith of the leper in today’s Gospel led him to approach Jesus by bowing to the ground and prostrating himself before Him as he said: “Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.”¹ There are two things that the leper did: his humility and surrender to the Lord. He did not force Jesus to heal him, giving Jesus the ‘freedom’ to do what He wills. This is also a good example for us when we pray: humble ourselves in front of the Lord and trusting Him that He will grant our prayers.

“This leper did something quite remarkable. He approached Jesus confidently and humbly, expecting that Jesus could and would heal him. Normally a leper would be stoned or at least warded off if he tried to come near a rabbi. Jesus not only grants the man his request, but he demonstrates the personal love, compassion, and tenderness of

¹ Luke 4: 12 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

God in his physical touch. The medical knowledge of his day would have regarded such contact as grave risk for incurring infection. Jesus met the man's misery with compassion and tender kindness. He communicated the love and mercy of God in a sign that spoke more eloquently than words. He touched the man and made him clean - not only physically but spiritually as well.”²

With our saint today, St. Andre also lived that kind of life. He embraced and welcomed those sick and afflicted people and prayed for them through St. Joseph’s intercession. He and his lay friends even built a chapel, now a basilica, the St. Joseph’s Oratory as a testimony of his dedication to the poor through St. Joseph devotion. St. Andre gives us an inspiration to do the same: pray for our sick brothers and sisters, embrace them with love and concern. Therefore, let us storm heaven in prayer to end the pandemic and heal those who are sick and afflicted. Let us bow down to Jesus the Divine Healer through the intercession of St. Andre and St. Joseph and say ‘Please Lord, if you choose, you can make us clean, heal and end this pandemic.’ Please, Lord! Amen.

² www.dailyscripture.net