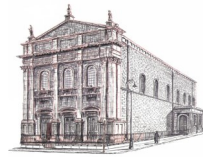




PARISH OF ST. AGATHA
13TH/14TH FEBRUARY 2021



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Jesus I Trust in You

DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?

In the words of Pope 'Francis

- **Fast from hurting words and say kind words.**
- **Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.**
- **Fast from anger and be filled with patience.**
- **Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.**
- **Fast from worries and have trust in God.**
- **Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.**
- **Fast from pressures and be prayerful.**
- **Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.**
- **Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.**
- **Fast from grudges and be reconciled.**

Pope Francis invites the faithful to overcome prejudices and the fear of getting involved in the lives of others, and follow the example of Jesus who shares our wounds and heals our lives. Reflecting on the Gospel reading of the day (Mk 1:40-45), Pope Francis spoke of how the Lord drew near to us, broke down every barrier, and touched our lives to heal them. The Gospel today tells of the encounter between Jesus and the sick man who had leprosy. He noted how Jesus allowed the sick man to draw near to Him. He is moved to compassion because of the fate of wounded humanity and comes to break down every barrier that prevents us from being in relationship with Him, with others and with ourselves.” The Pope urged Christians to go beyond selfishness, calculations or fears that prevent them from getting involved with the sufferings of others. Instead, he said, let us ask the Lord for the grace to find the courage to emerge from our isolation and self-commiseration, and open our hearts to "a love that goes beyond conventions, overcoming prejudices. (Vatican News/Linda Bordoni).

THE DISEASE OF SIN IS LIKE LEPROSY

Unrepentant sin is like suffering from a spiritual terminal disease which will kill the soul if not treated. It is important that we understand that committing sin spiritually sets us outside the Church, because we become unclean in God’s eyes. In the same way, suffering from the disease of leprosy sets the leper outside his society. In today’s Gospel (Mk 1:40-45), Jesus comes to bring the leper back by the ritual means prescribed by God’s Divine Law. The leper had the desire to be cured and healed by Jesus, as he humbly knelt down before the Lord. Jesus wants us to do the same thing, especially in Lent, to come before Him in the Sacrament of Confession and humbly kneel down asking to be made clean from the disease of our sins. Jesus takes pity on the leper and healed his condition. Jesus does the same thing to us in Confession. However, we must go to Him requesting forgiveness, which is a form of Healing, otherwise our souls will continue to suffer sickness and spiritually rot.

SIN SETS US OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

Lepers were out casted by their community because of their condition. It is important for us to know that if we do not seek God’s Divine Mercy in the Healing Sacrament of Confession, then we seriously separate ourselves from God and become out of communion with the Church. The unclean stench of sin will not be tolerated by God. In these pandemic times, the public Mass is banned but the Sacrament of Confession is not. It is an individual private act which can be entered into by appointment with your local Priest. My number is 0879117575. Please allow Jesus to heal you from the sinful diseases whether mortal or venial that weighs the soul down.

THE DEVIL IS THE CAUSE OF SIN

The leper stands for the sinner who gets distracted by the devil and no longer is able to worship God. In Jesus telling the healed man *to go show yourself to the priest*, He is directing him back to the Church Family which he divorced himself from a long time ago. The man has still to be reintegrated into the community by the Priest, who God has appointed to minister His Church. Jesus strongly warned him not to publicise this miracle, because he wished to remain in the area and heal many more, but sadly, the healed man disobeyed this Command of Jesus and sinned again. He told everybody. The devil is behind every sin and he didn’t want Jesus to move freely in the city and release people from his captivity, so he tempted the man to disobey Jesus and tell everybody, which he did. However, the devil is no match for God and the people hearing that Jesus was outside the city in a deserted place, flocked to Him for healing. In spiritual sickness, weakness, shame and sin, the sinner feels like a leper. However, Jesus always makes Himself available for us to come to Him in the attitude of worship and be healed. He is the Lord Our God of Divine Mercy. This is the key step in getting our lives in order. This Lent let us give-up sinning and extend the almsgiving of forgiveness by giving the gift of pardon to those who trespass against us. God bless, Fr. Brendan.