

The last line of our gospel this evening/morning says, “and they (the Apostles) anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.” I often wonder, who were these “sick”, and what exactly did they suffer from? Were these people lepers? Did they suffer from chronic diseases? Were they those near the point of death? Or was it a case from anyone to everyone who had a cough, a cold, a flu, a pain here or there, all the way to those afflicted with birth defects, life-long maladies, and conditions that refused to respond to any treatment? It’s unclear who these people were and the extent of their “sicknesses.” But perhaps there’s a reason for this ambiguity. Perhaps it is meant to give hope to all who suffer in some way or another.

In Jesus' sending of the Twelve, we see the very first ministry of those who would be the foundation of the Church. It is a foreshadowing of what the Church was to be about: reaching out, touching the weak, and healing them. As it was noted last week, especially in our second reading, we all (if we are honest with ourselves) come to the realization that we are weak. We all need to be healed in some way. Yet, as it was pointed out, the healing we **want**, and the healing we **actually need**, are often two different things.

That's why, I think, our gospel is so ambiguous with regard to the **specific conditions** of those the Apostles healed. The point is, we all are sick; we all need healing, we all need redemption. And this is exactly what the Twelve (the first ministers of the Church) were sent out to address on behalf of our Lord and God. Jesus' ministry was not meant to be self-contained. He knew He couldn't go out, address, and touch **every** person. Even though He was God in human flesh, there was **no way** he could physically minister every single person extant in his day, nor those **after** his ascension. The point is, **even Jesus** needed help; and He sought it. So why is it then, that **we** often think that the help and healing **we need**, has to come from ourselves?

I don't have time to get into the psycho-spiritual reasons why we so often think or feel this way. But suffice it to say, the reason comes down to Original Sin; that trait in us which convinces us we have to deal with our issues and shortcomings on our own. This is the **grand** lie Satan has stuck in our heads and hearts, and continues to try to exploit to this very day. The logic goes: "I don't **deserve** the healing and help of God, because I am a sinner and I am not worthy of it." Of course we don't **dare** publicly believe or profess that, but interiorly isn't that often the case? Don't we feel that **our** problems are **ours**, and that **we** are the ones (the only ones) who should have to address them?

Yet, isn't it interesting that Jesus, the Son of God, God himself in human flesh, was also confronted with this dilemma of **not** being able to do **all** that he wanted to do? He **too** had limitations. He **too** was unable (and is still unable) to do everything God meant his ministry to accomplish. We can argue that Jesus' death on the cross saved humanity, and in **that** He has done it all. True. But as our gospel demonstrates, Jesus was and **still is unable** to bring his personal message and touch to his beloved, **without** those who minister in his name and place.

Jesus was wise and ***humble*** enough to recognize that he ***too*** had limitations, and that he needed the help of ***others*** to fulfill his mission. While Jesus' mission continues with the help of those he has called (namely, all of us) hopefully we can bring ourselves to follow his example, no matter what ***our own*** needs or issues are.

When we come to communion and are offered the Body of Christ, we say “Amen,” “Yes” “I believe.” I pray that we, too, will **take** the reality of our communion with Him and with one another to heart, and come to recognize and believe that we are never on our own; but rather we are all **one** in our joys as well as struggles. In our weakness and time of need, may we **have** the humility to avail ourselves to Christ’s Body, the Church, who by his will and intention, is there to walk with us in this community of fellow sinners and believers, to address and overcome the challenges and shortcomings we would rather, yet mistakenly, try to handle on our own.