

There is an obvious parallel between today's first reading.

In both cases there is a divine intervention in dealing with the contagious disease of leprosy.

In the 1st reading from the Book of Leviticus, the Lord gives Moses and Aaron rules for the the quarantining of lepers: "They must live apart, they must live outside the camp." Furthermore, they must identify themselves as having a contagious disease by "wearing their clothes torn and their hair disordered."

There is an obvious parallel between Moses and Aaron and the Australian state governments who are similarly quarantining people and enacting other regulations with respect to a contagious disease, in the name of looking out for the common good. The problem in our present case of COVID 19 is that the burden of protecting the common good is not being equally shared in various ways. Some are profiting from the pandemic while others are suffering significant losses, Jobkeeper and Jobseeker notwithstanding.

(In OT Jewish society the religious rulers are also the civil rulers - there is only one law - simultaneously religious and civil.)

But there is a major difference between the first reading and the gospel:

In the gospel, God in Jesus via his human nature, via his body and sense of touch, actually allows the leper to break the Mosaic law by approaching him, and then Jesus breaks the law himself by touching the leper to heal him: "Feeling sorry for him, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him."

NOW Jesus continues to heal in so many ways in our time via his body, the Church. This is one of our definitions of the Church, i.e. the Church is the Body of Christ - the Church is also defined as the People of God.

We have in our parish the example, which everybody sees because they are always wearing their distinctive white and royal blue habits, of the Missionaries of Charity going about their mission in the name of Christ and his Church. They go out in twos, since and the Lord says: "where two or three of you have gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of you." They are the Church, the Body of Christ, ministering particularly to the marginalised.

They needn't be alone in their mission. All of us in the Church, who receive the body of Christ in Word and Sacrament, can in turn also then go as the body of Christ, as a healing sacrament to the world.

We are in the process of establishing some groups in the parish to do exactly that - a St Vincent de Paul group and a Legion of Mary group, and I invite expressions of interest from anybody who would like to join these groups. Of course, in the meantime, there is nothing to prevent any of us bringing the healing touch of Christ, which we have received ourselves to others, each in our own way, according to the circumstances of our own lives.

“Go Make Disciples”: Once served by the Church, we are called to service of the Church ourselves: from the Pope down to the person who has just been ministered to by the Body of Christ themselves.

The Popes themselves, since the time of Pope Saint Gregory the Great, have styled themselves the *Serui Servorum Dei* (Servants of the Servants of God).