



6th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME **YEAR B – February 11, 2018**

Sometimes translators of the Bible get the literal translation wrong. We are used to hearing in today's Gospel (Mark 1:40-45) that Jesus was "filled with pity" when he saw the leper, but the Greek word St. Mark uses is more accurately translated "anger," not "pity." Jesus was angry when he saw the leper.

Except for the cleansing of the temple in John's Gospel, generations of translators found it hard to imagine Jesus angry. Some thought then that anger is always sinful, and Jesus cannot commit sin. He cannot sin, but His anger provides a wonderful insight into the good side of anger.

Anger tells us that something is wrong. It is an important and valuable emotion. Anger is value-neutral. It's what we do with it that defines its effect in our lives. Some of us sit on it and stew for a long time and never express the anger. We develop all kinds of psychic and somatic symptoms because we have been taught that all anger is sinful and must be unexpressed. Others gain energy from their anger and use it to right what is wrong.

People who had any type of skin disease in first century Palestine were called lepers. They were treated shamefully. They had to live outside the villages and towns, call out "unclean, unclean" when they came near others, could never attend the temple, and were considered cursed by God. They were excluded from the Chosen People - not by God, but by the chosen people.

No wonder Jesus was angry when he encountered a man with leprosy. He confronted a social class system that robbed this man of his human dignity. He confronted manmade religious laws that must be obeyed as if they were God's laws.

We are challenged this Sunday to trust our anger. It's not only about fighting for our rights when we have been wronged, it's also about fighting for the rights of others when they've been wronged. Sometimes it even calls for going to war. Sometimes it calls for speaking out against a war that is unjust. Sometimes it calls for advocating change in others. Sometimes it calls for making changes in ourselves.

This Weekend Jesus declares again that despite what we might think about ourselves, there is nothing in us that can't be healed. There is nothing in us that can't be changed. And that includes using anger in a sinful way.

We are challenged to use our anger as Jesus used his. For a few moments in silence, reflect on these questions: what makes you angry - and – what do you do with that anger?



Anger is not sinful!