



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 11. February 2018

[Multimedia]

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

On these Sundays, the Gospel according to Mark presents to us Jesus who heals sick people of every kind. In this context, the [World Day of the Sick](#) fits well. It is observed today, 11 February, Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lourdes. For this reason, with our heart's gaze directed toward the Grotto of Massabielle, let us contemplate Jesus as the true physician of bodies and souls, whom God the Father sent into the world to heal humanity, marked by sin and by its consequences.

Today's Gospel passage (cf. Mk 1:40-45) presents to us the healing of a man afflicted with leprosy, a disease that in the Old Testament was considered a grave impurity and required the leper to be separated from the community: they lived in isolation. His condition was truly pitiful, because the mind-set of the time made him feel unclean even before God, and not only before mankind. Even before God. Therefore the leper of the Gospel beseeches Jesus with these words: "If you will, you can make me clean" (v. 40).

Upon hearing this, Jesus feels pity (cf. v. 41). It is very important to pay attention to this inner resonance of Jesus, as we did at length during the Jubilee of Mercy. We cannot understand the works of Christ, we cannot understand Christ himself, if we do not enter his compassionate and merciful heart. And this is what spurs him to stretch out his hand to that man afflicted with leprosy, to touch him and say to him: "I will; be clean" (v. 40). The most shocking fact is that Jesus *touches* the leper, because that was absolutely prohibited by Mosaic law. Touching a leper meant being

infected even inside, in the spirit, that is, becoming unclean. But in this case the influence flows not from the leper to Jesus so as to transfer the contagion, but actually from Jesus to the leper so as to grant him purification. In this healing, apart from Jesus' compassion and mercy, we admire his audacity. He is concerned neither about the contagion nor about the rules, but is moved only by the will to free that man from the curse that burdens him.

Brothers and sisters, no disease is a cause of impurity: disease certainly involves the whole person, but in no way does it impair or impede his or her relationship with God. On the contrary, a sick person can be even more united with God. Instead, sin: that yes, is what makes us unclean! Selfishness, arrogance, entering the world of corruption: these are diseases of the heart from which we need to be purified by turning to Jesus like the leper: "If you will, you can make me clean!".

And now, let us observe a moment of silence, and each of us — all of you, me, everyone — can think about our own heart, look within ourselves, and see our own impurities, our own sins. And may each of us, in silence, but with the voice of our heart, say to Jesus: "If you will, you can make me clean". Let us all do so in silence.

"If you will, you can make me clean".

"If you will, you can make me clean".

And each time we approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation with a contrite heart, the Lord also repeats to us: "I will; be clean!". How much joy there is in this! In this way the leprosy of sin is overcome; we return to joyfully experience our filial relationship with God and we are fully readmitted into the community.

Through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, our Immaculate Mother, let us ask the Lord, who brought wellbeing to the sick, to heal even our inner wounds with his infinite mercy, and thus give us back hope and peace of heart.

After the Angelus:

Dear brothers and sisters, today is the opening of *registration for World Youth Day*, which will take place in Panama in January 2019. I too, in the presence of two young people, will now register on the internet [*he clicks on the table*]. There. I have registered as a pilgrim to World Youth Day. We must prepare ourselves! I invite all the young people of the world to live with faith and enthusiasm this event of grace and fraternity whether by going to Panama or by participating in their own communities.

On 15 February, in the Far East and in various parts of the world, millions of men and women will celebrate the *Lunar New Year*. I convey my cordial greeting to all their families, with the hope that they may always experience more solidarity, fraternity and the desire for good, by contributing to creating a society in which every person is welcomed, protected, promoted and integrated. I invite you to pray for the gift of peace, a precious treasure to seek with compassion, foresight and courage. I accompany and bless everyone.

I greet the families, parishes, associations and all those who have come from Italy and from so many parts of the world; in particular, the pilgrims from Murcia, Spain and the children from Guimarães, Portugal.

I greet the Congolese community of Rome and I join in their prayer for peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I remind you that this intention will be particularly present on the Day of Prayer and Fasting that I announced for 23 February.

Present today are many Italian parishes and many young people who have made their confirmation, profession of faith and catechism. It is not possible for me to name every group, but I thank you all for coming and I encourage you to proceed with joy and with generosity, witnessing everywhere to the goodness and mercy of the Lord.

I address a special thought to sick people who, in every part of the world, in addition to poor health, often suffer from isolation and marginalization. May the Blessed Virgin, *Salus Infirmorum*, help each one to find comfort in body and soul, thanks to proper health care and to the fraternal charity that is able to offer concrete and supportive attention.

I wish everyone a happy Sunday. And please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch!
Arrivederci!