



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session, read all the readings.

Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46

Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

Mark 1:40-45

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Is there a particular reading that appeals to you? Is there a word or image that engages you?

RCL Benziger.

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Read the following **Word in Liturgy** and **Catholic Doctrine** sections. Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need.

### The Word In Liturgy

Today's first and third readings deal with the subject of illness and healing, particularly with regard to diseases of the skin. Keeping in mind the ancient Judaic context provided by the first reading, the healing that Jesus effects in the Gospel can be seen in its true dimensions—both as a personal and a communal event.



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The Levitical legislation referred to in the first reading does not concern leprosy (Hansen's disease, as we know it today), but rather a whole array of skin ailments. The Aaronic priests examined anyone suffering from such diseases and determined their condition. Although the requirement of exclusion from the community may have originated in fear of contagion, the directives embodied in the text before us are clearly based on the religious principle of cultic worthiness. A holy people, in the understanding of that time, was required to be physically as well as morally whole.

Because the scourge of the skin diseases known as leprosy was so dreadful, the leper's bold approach to Jesus and Jesus' loving response are all the more remarkable. The story is charged by the drama of personal encounter: Jesus is moved by the sight of the man; he desires to help him. The miracle story follows a standard, three-part format, in which the illness is described, Jesus acts, and a complete cure becomes evident. More subtle is the exorcistic character of the healing, hinted at by the stern words of Jesus and the expression that the illness "left him." Jesus' instruction that the man show himself to the priests, although it does certainly indicate that a full restoration to community can only be accomplished through such means, also points to something more than an obedient compliance with the Mosaic Law. The phrase "that should be proof for them" (v. 44) suggests that the identity of Jesus is a point of conflict for the religious establishment of his day. Yet Jesus is not eager to bring this conflict to a head. He enjoins the man to tell no one of his healing (another instance of Mark's "messianic secret"), a command he promptly disobeys.

## **Catholic Doctrine**

### ***Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick***

Jesus showed compassion for those who were sick and exhorted them to believe in the goodness and healing power of the Most High. While he did not heal everyone, his miracles signified the coming kingdom and announced a much more radical mending—God's victory over sin and death through the paschal mystery (CCC 1505). The Church continues the healing mission of the Risen Lord by taking care of those who are ill, by praying for them, and by celebrating the sacrament of the anointing of the sick (CCC 1509).

How is this sacrament celebrated? The Word of God is proclaimed from sacred Scripture. Then a laying on of hands in silence by either a priest or bishop occurs, followed by the

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offering of the prayer of faith. Then the person who is sick is anointed with holy oil by the priest or bishop. The anointing can be made on the forehead and on the palms of the hands. If necessary, it can be done only on the forehead or, given the condition of the person who is sick, on any other suitable part of the body (PCS 23). The sacrament can be celebrated in a private home, in the hospital, in a nursing facility, or in a church. Families and parishioners are encouraged to be present to offer the comfort and support of the whole community (CCC 1516).

