



Lenten Reflection for Thursday, February 23, 2023

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Matthew 8: 1-4

When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.' He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I do choose. Be made clean!' Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'

Today's reflection is by Katie Meleney.

As ever this Gospel reading feels particularly salient to me at this point in my life. One of the ways in which I strive to follow the path of Jesus is through my chosen profession; I am a physician. Through my efforts to treat those who are most in need I often end up treating patients with mental health diagnoses and substance use disorders, those who are in many ways lepers in modern society. Individuals around whom many people feel uncomfortable, who we sometimes wish were out of sight and out of mind, and who, through society's treatment of them, desperately crave loving interactions. My greatest challenge in treating these patients is their own acceptance of their illness, many don't believe they have a problem. Those who ask for treatment, much like the leper in this reading, will receive it. But many struggling with these illnesses are ashamed and unwilling to expose themselves, even to a healer, for fear of judgment or worse that the healing itself won't take place. Those who do seek care are hopeful. They have a belief, a faith that they can become

well, can "be made clean". I cannot prescribe that belief, nor can they pick it up over the counter. That faith comes from the Healer that I can try to emulate but can never match. This passage reminds me that while it is good to be ready to help someone in their healing, it is only by the grace of God and through their faith that they will present to be healed. For those success stories, those who seek care, receive it, and stay on that path of recovery, whatever the treatment prescribed by clinicians, it is truly their faith that has healed them.

Katie is a physician in her hometown of Brooklyn. She found the Church of the Holy Apostles when she and her husband Peter bought a quirkily designed house around the corner. Katie and Peter began attending This Little Light with their son, Thaddeus called Teddy and have recently welcomed baby Harriett called Hattie!

