



Lent reflection for Monday, March 13th

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Luke 5:12-15

Once, when Jesus was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, 'Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.' Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, 'I do choose. Be made clean.' Immediately the leprosy* left him. And he ordered him to tell no one. 'Go', he said, 'and show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, for a testimony to them.' But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.

Today's reflection is by Geoff Kurtz

The man with leprosy says, "Lord, *if you choose*, you can make me clean." Why does he put it that way? I wonder how often he's asked someone for help, only to see that person turn away.

Jesus says, "*I do choose*. Be made clean." When I say that I've made a choice, I mean that I could have done something else, but I had a reason for doing what I did. But that doesn't feel like what's happening with Jesus here in Luke's story. It doesn't feel like he's weighing his options, considering the reasons he might prefer to do this or do that. The emphatic way Jesus speaks – "*I do choose*" – makes it seem as if he's saying: "*Of course* I'm going to heal you. There was never a chance that I wouldn't. Your healing is who I *am*."

The story begins with Jesus in the city crowd, and ends with Jesus in a deserted place. To meet Jesus face to face, like the man with leprosy did, I will need to look for him in two kinds of places: in the faces of people around me, and in solitude. Both. Somehow, it's the same Jesus in both.

Geoff lives in Kensington with his wife, Alyson, and their three children.

