

**February 10-11, 2018**

**Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46**

**First Corinthians 10:31-11:1**

**Mark 1:40-45**

In the days and hours before lengthy trips many, if not most of us, make a conscious effort to PREPARE for whatever excursion we are about to undertake. Depending on the season and the location to where we are traveling, we select suitable clothing, and double check whatever lotions, creams or ointments might be needed (sunscreen?, skin moisturizers? or chap stick?). Assorted reservations need to be considered for a rental car, restaurants or destination activities. Finally, necessary paper/social media work such as ticketing and procurement of appropriate ID's needs handling so that there are no unfortunate surprises during the trip. On these final days prior to LENT, this is our opportunity to PREPARE for the JOURNEY, which is the essence of LENT. Starting on Ash Wednesday and concluding with the start of Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday/Easter Sunday), like any good trip...who we are at the trip's end should not be the same people we are at starting it. This entails some honest reflection about WHO WE PRESENTLY ARE and WHOM WE WOULD LIKE TO BECOME by journey's end? Our Scriptures speak of the disfiguring disease of leprosy and the isolation it entails. While perhaps not leprosy of the flesh, what leprosy things have we embraced/contracted that cause us to spiritually/communally isolate ourselves or be isolated by the larger community? Addictions such as pornography, drugs or alcohol? Racism, gender related issues, or the diminishment of the 'image of God' within people about whom we do not want to care? The Gospel speaks of Jesus cleansing those disfigured by their leprosy...and the implication is that Jesus can cleanse us from the things that disfigure us...as long as we are willing to seek him out, ask for his help and do what he instructs. The JOURNEY of LENT begins on this Wednesday, whom do we want to become by Easter and with what do we need Jesus' help in order to become that person?

The spirit of Mardi Gras infuses these days, thanks for spending a few hours of them with our Santa Clara community. Our Children/Family Faith Formation Team is hosting a 'PRE-LENT AFTERNOON of PREPARATION' this afternoon, starting immediately after the 12Noon Mass with lunch and continuing until 4pm with activities and presentations for adults and children. Open and available for EVERYONE, the afternoon is for anyone and everyone who wishes to attend/participate (not just for people within the Faith Formation programs)...and...is FREE!!!! This WEDNESDAY is not JUST Valentine's Day, it is ASH WEDNESDAY, the beginning of Lent. Ashes will be distributed starting at 3am, pausing for the 8:30am Mass (with Ashes distributed within that Mass) and then offered again at the conclusion of the 10am SFA School Mass (around 11am) and then, no more ashes at Santa Clara. Please see the article elsewhere in the Bulletin regarding the self-dispensation you may give yourselves so as to celebrate Valentine's Day...as long as you honor the Fasting and Abstaining from meat another day this week. Our FIRST Stations of the Cross and KofC Dinner is this Friday, the 16<sup>th</sup>, please see the schedule in the Bulletin. If you were absent last week when we collected our PSA pledges, I will happily receive them from you this weekend (or anytime you choose to offer your gift) and give you a look in the eye, a firm handshake and a heartfelt THANK YOU! For those of you who have already pledged...THANK YOU for praying and dreaming our future into existence. See you this Wednesday, in the meantime, 'laissez le bon temps rouler.' And remember, you are loved! FKB