

ACA COMMITMENT SUNDAY HOMILY 2024
SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME—B
11 FEBRUARY 2024

In today's Gospel, Jesus cures a leper. As he does so we gain an insight into his mission, a mission he gives to us. Leprosy is a terrible physical affliction. It is painful and it disfigures the body. But unlike other illnesses, it is a disease that isolates the leper for he must live away and apart from the community. We know from our recent experience of the pandemic how loneliness and isolation can bring great suffering.

Notice that Jesus heals not only the skin disease, but the whole man, body, soul, and spirit so that the leper can rejoin the family and the community, including worshipping community, as he is told to show himself to the priest. Jesus heals in a way that restores the leper's humanity, for the leper is once again someone who belongs to others, as he talks, worships, works, and eats with all in the community. Belonging is what it means to be fully human.

Jesus asks us to do the same on his behalf, to heal in a way that restores the humanity of others by making room at the table of life for all. Each year we take up this mission with fresh energy through the Annual Catholic Appeal. This is Commitment Weekend for the Appeal and in light of the Gospel we have chosen the theme *Together at the table*. We take up this mission together but also to make sure that everyone is included. We are true to Christ's mission when we reach out to those in need with his healing power, restoring their humanity and doing all we can to let them know that they belong.

Through the Appeal, we as one body reach out to struggling parish communities, schools, religious education and ministry formation programs, and respect life and peace initiatives in the Archdiocese. Through Catholic Relief Services, we also reach out to people beyond our local Church who are suffering from illnesses, natural disasters, and the calamities of war.

Together at the table—that is our vision, our mission, and our purpose. As your financial circumstances permit, please join me and other Catholics and make a gift

to the Annual Appeal. Once your parish meets its goal, proceeds will return to your parish to support its mission in your local community.

Belonging means coming together at the table of life in all its forms, but especially at the Eucharistic table, the altar of the Lord's sacrifice. It is at this table that we are renewed and become fully human, for it is here that we experience what it means to belong to each other and to belong to Christ. As you celebrate the Eucharist today and find healing in experiencing what it means to be fully human, as someone who belongs to others and to Christ, I pray that you will join with me in taking up the healing mission of Jesus so that all will find a place at the table of life.

[IN PEW VERSION]

Now I invite you to turn your attention to your pastor who will walk you through the instructions for making a pledge and a contribution to the Appeal.

May the good Lord bless and keep you and all your loved ones in his loving care. Thank you.

[ONLINE VERSION]

Please take some time to pray and reflect on what it means for you to carry on the healing and gathering mission of Jesus, so that we can all be *Together at the table* and how that might inspire you to support the Annual Catholic Appeal.

At the end of this video, you will see instructions for making a pledge or gift to support the Appeal, if you wish. May the good Lord bless and keep you and your loved ones in his loving care. Thank you.