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Friday after Epiphany (C) — White

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Companion in Isolation

by Cl. John Christian Lacap, SSP

Have you ever felt feared and/or left out by others? Perhaps, separated from a loved one? Isolated? Alone?

Some weeks ago, a close friend of mine ask for prayers because she'll have to undergo a surgery. With the safety protocols in place, she had no companions, no visitors, no family to accompany her in this most painful moment of her life. To make things worse, she's still grieving the loss of her uncle, the same uncle who raised her while her parents were abroad, who died due to Covid-19 complications. Every time she closes her eyes, the image of her deceased uncle appears and the many unanswered questions envelopes her already wretched state. "How can I celebrate Christmas or the New Year with all this brokenness?" she asked. I was dumbfounded. Hers was a truly miserable isolation. I did not know what to say so I simply asked her to pray and spend some personal time with the Lord and open herself up to the movement of the Spirit in her heart.



The leper in today's Gospel also experienced the same miserable isolation, not only for days or weeks or months. He had been miserably isolated since he had that disease! He was seen as a living disease and a dead man in their town. His sickness makes him unclean in the eyes of the ancient Jewish society. But that day was different. When Jesus was passed by their town, despair was turned to hope. From being this man who had no hopes of improvement, the sick man was transformed into a living miracle! From miserable isolation, he came face-to-face with the God of mercy in the person of Jesus who cleansed (literally and culturally) him from his disease! With this cleansing encounter, he was now transformed from a living disease to a living testimony of God's mercy!

Weeks after her successful

surgery, my friend called me back, this time in a more joyous tone. She said that after our talk, the pain, exhaustion, and despair didn't leave her. What changed her, though, was her encounter Jesus, her total surrender to him. Rather than a traumatic experience, she saw her moment of desolation as an opportunity to withdraw from the hustle and bustle of everyday life, an opportunity to be with Jesus again.

Sisters and brothers, we are called today to testify to God's love. As we encounter Jesus in our day-to-day encounters with each other, let us be transformed by cleansing healing power of God that works silently but surely in our hearts. Let us look at 2022 as an opportunity to find rest and rediscover our own deserted place within where we can encounter the Lord face-to-face, again.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 112 [111]: 4)
(*Recited when there is no opening song.*)

A light has risen in the darkness for the upright of heart; the Lord is generous, merciful and just.

Greeting

(*The sign of the cross is made here.*)

P—Grace to you and peace from God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(*These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly.*)

P—The Epiphany marks the journey of the wise men who were led by the star. Jesus himself is our star who draws us to himself as the light that shines out in the darkness. In today's Gospel, as Jesus healed the leper, so he takes us to himself to heal us of leprosy, the leprosy of our spirit.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.
(*Pause*)

All—I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, (*Strike your breast*) through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

Collect

P — Let us pray. (*Pause*)

Grant, we ask, almighty God, that the Nativity of the Savior of the world, made known by the guidance of a star, may be revealed ever more fully to our minds.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All — Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (1 Jn 5:5–13) (*Sit*)

The light of faith is nourished by the water of Baptism, the indwelling of the Spirit, the Body and Blood of the Eucharist, and the testimony of the Father through signs and miracles. Eternal life is in the Son, to be enjoyed only by those who possess him.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint John

BELOVED: Who indeed is the victor over the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is the one who came through water and Blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and Blood. The Spirit is the one who testifies, and the Spirit is truth. So there are three who testify, the Spirit, the water, and the Blood, and the three are of one accord. If we accept human testimony, the testimony of God is surely greater. Now the testimony of God is this, that he has testified on behalf of his Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God has this testimony within himself.

Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar by not believing the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever possesses the Son has life; whoever does not possess the Son of God does not have life.

I write these things to you so that you may know that you have eternal life, you who believe in the name of the Son of God.

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 147)

R—Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.

1. Glorify the LORD, O Jerusalem; / praise your God, O Zion. / For he has strengthened the bars of your gates; / he has blessed your children within you. (**R**)

2. He has granted peace in your borders; / with the best of wheat he fills you. / He sends forth his command to the earth; / swiftly runs his word! (**R**)

3. He has proclaimed his word to Jacob, / his statutes and his ordinances to Israel. / He has not done thus for any other nation; / his ordinances he has not made known to them. Alleluia. (**R**)

Alleluia (Mt 4:23) (*Stand*)

All—Alleluia, alleluia. Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom and cured every disease among the people. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Lk 5:12–16)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
All—Glory to you, O Lord.

IT HAPPENED that there was a man full of leprosy in one of the towns where Jesus was; and when he saw Jesus, he fell prostrate, pleaded with him, and said, "Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean." Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I do will it. Be made clean." And the leprosy left him immediately. Then he ordered him not to tell anyone, but "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them." The report about him spread all the more, and great crowds assembled to

listen to him and to be cured of their ailments, but he would withdraw to deserted places to pray.

—The Gospel of the Lord.

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily *(Sit)*

Prayer of the Faithful

P—The Lord Jesus healed a man full of leprosy and returned him to his family and community. We pray, O Father, that we too may become instruments of healing through service of our brothers and sisters, especially the sick.

R—Father, listen to our prayer.

C—Lay your healing hands upon all those who are sick. Have compassion on all those who are suffering so that they may be delivered from their wretchedness. We pray: **(R)**

C—Embrace in your loving care, those who are afflicted with cancer and other malignant diseases. We ask this through the intercession of St. Jude, apostle and relative of the Lord Jesus. We pray: **(R)**

C—We pray for the little children who are sick. Take care of them towards their full recovery. Comfort and care for them until they are laughing and playing again. We pray: **(R)**

C—We pray for doctors, nurses, hospital personnel, and all those who attend to the sick. Keep them in safety and reward them for their selfless labors. We pray: **(R)**

C—Stir in us the virtue of prudence so we may take care of our bodies through living well and by avoiding vices, that we and our family may be spared from the anxiety and sorrow and turn to you in joy. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions *(pause)*. We pray: **(R)**

P—Father of the poor and consoler of the afflicted, we humbly entrust to you those who are sick and those who suffer in any manner. Heal them

that they may turn to you with praise and thanksgiving.

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST



Presentation of the Gifts *(Stand)*

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—Receive with favor, O Lord, we pray, the offerings of your people, that what they profess with devotion and faith may be theirs through these heavenly mysteries.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

Preface III of the Nativity of the Lord

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For through him the holy exchange that restores our life has shone forth today in splendor: when our frailty is assumed by your Word not only does human mortality receive unending honor but by this wondrous union we, too, are made eternal.

And so, in company with the choirs of Angels, we praise you, and with joy we proclaim:
All—Holy, Holy, Holy... (Kneel)

Acclamation *(Stand)*

All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All — Our Father...

P — Deliver us, Lord...

All — For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion *(Kneel)*

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon *(1 Jn 4:9)*

By this the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his Only Begotten Son into the world, so that we might have life through him.

Prayer after Communion *(Stand)*

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who touch us through our partaking of your Sacrament, work, we pray, the effects of its power in our hearts, that we may be made fit to receive your gift through this very gift itself.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P—Bow down for the blessing. *(Pause)*

Be propitious to your people, o God, that, freed from every evil, they may serve you with all their heart and ever stand firm under your protection.

Through Christ our lord
All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—The Mass is ended. Go in peace glorifying the Lord by your life.

All—Thanks be to God.



PRAYER TO THE **SACRED HEART** *of Jesus*

Divine Jesus, you have said, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," behold me kneeling at your feet, filled with a lively faith and confidence in the promises dictated by your Sacred Heart and pronounced by Your adorable lips. I come to ask this favor: *(Here silently mention your petitions)*.

To whom can I turn to if not to you whose Heart is the source of all graces and merits? Where should I seek if not in the treasure which contains all the riches of your kindness and mercy? Where should I knock if not at the door through which God gives himself to us and through which we go to God? I have recourse to You, Heart of Jesus. In you I find consolation when afflicted,

protection when persecuted, strength when burdened with trials, and light in doubt and darkness.

Dear Jesus, I firmly believe that you can grant me the grace I implore, even though it should require a miracle. You have only to will it, and my prayer will be granted. I admit that I am most unworthy of your favors, but this is not a reason for me to be discouraged. You are the God of Mercy and you will not refuse a contrite heart. Cast upon me a look of mercy, I beg of you, and your kind Heart will find in my miseries and weaknesses a reason for granting my prayers.

O Sacred Heart, whatever may be your decision with regard to my request, I will never stop adoring, loving, praising and serving you. My Lord Jesus, be pleased to accept this my act of perfect resignation to the decrees of your adorable Heart which I sincerely desire may be fulfilled by me and all your creatures forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I know that there is but one thing impossible to you: to be without pity to those who are suffering or in distress. Look upon me, I beg of you, dear Jesus, and grant me the grace for which I humbly implore you through the Immaculate Heart of your most sorrowful Mother. You have entrusted me to her as her child, and her prayers are all-powerful with you. Amen.

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