

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

February 11, 2024 • 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Mark 1:40–45

Retreat and Prayer

Jesus' reputation spreads, and it becomes difficult for him to preach. When he cures a leper, he tells him not to publicize the event. But the man does not listen. He tells everyone about the cure. Jesus is forced to hide in deserted places, and still the crowds find him.

When Jesus began his ministry he worked miracles not to prove who he was, and certainly not to show off his power. Jesus healed people because his heart was filled with compassion. At times Jesus might even have felt that the miracles were getting in the way. Jesus had something important to tell the people, and he didn't need them distracted.

When Jesus heals the leper he asks him to tell no one. He is aware of what will happen if the story of another healing gets around. People will swarm him. And that is exactly what happened. When the leper told people how he was cured, Jesus had to retreat, staying outside of the town.

I know I used to feel like that sometimes when all five children were home. It seemed like there was always someone wanting something from me. The requests were endless. "Mom can you fix this zipper, bake some cupcakes, find my socks, make me a costume..."—and all of that before breakfast. Like Jesus I also had to retreat even if it was just to a locked bathroom.

That was the strategy that got me through the day—retreat and prayer. Lunchtime was the best; a few peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and *Sesame Street* would usually give me twenty minutes to pray and get myself centered again. Think about how many times Scripture tells us Jesus left his friends to go off for some quiet and prayer. If Jesus needed quiet prayer time, think how much more we do.

FAMILY RESPONSE

Have each person talk about different ways to respond when we are feeling frustrated or overworked.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

How do you cope when you are feeling overwhelmed? What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?