

## St. Monica's Homily February 14 & 15, 2015

### Lev. 13:1-2, 45-46

Leprosy - Call out, unclean, unclean

### MK. 1:40-45

If you choose you can make me clean. I do choose. Be made clean.

\*\*\*\*\*

{Saturday: Happy St. Valentine's Day - a day about love,  
about receiving love, about giving love, ...  
and we will be talking about God's love.}

\*\*\*\*\*

I'm here because Father Ray and I will be giving a CAFE on Wednesday, February 25th, on "Called by your Name". It's about the deeper name that God calls you, that is deeper than the name your parents gave you. I will come back to this.

I'm going to talk about the healing of the leper, ashes, being a log, becoming one with God, and our Name.

In the the Gospel. Jesus responded to the request of the leper with love and compassion, ...and healed him.

Jesus healed the leper. "Be made clean. Go and show yourself to the priest" - to the Doctor, to the one in authority who can validate that you are well, that you are yourself again.

When someone gets leprosy, the disease first attacks their extremities, their fingers, toes, nose, etc. gradually turning them into a white ash.

It's Ash Wednesday this week. Often we say, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust" - eventually, and the essence of who we are is all that is left, and it is with God. What about now? Let us consider ashes. Let us consider ashes in a positive way - in relation to being fully healed, and being fully yourself.

Living your name is also being fully healed, being fully yourself.

For each of us, becoming, fully ourselves is a journey, a journey of discovery, a journey of healing, a journey to full union with God.

We are most united to God when we are most who God created us to be - when we are living the name that God called us.

To do this we need to get in touch with our deeper self, and with God.

I'm going to read you a poem written by Sheila Rodgers, a woman from Dorval. It's called, "Union".

We have been talking about ashes, so I am going to ask you to picture yourself as a log.

An open fire  
Fascinates ...  
I know  
Instinctively  
I am the log  
God's love - the fire  
For my transformation  
To free  
The real me.

At first  
Only the surface is touched.  
Little changes,  
Some of the knots  
Some of the moss  
Is charred away  
Then the bark  
My tough outer shell  
Now  
The fire  
Begins to find  
Something more  
Something real  
Mixed  
With all the superficial

We all have knots - the ways we are we are tied up in knots, in worries, the ways we hold on to hurts, the ways we make snap judgments, or snap at others. What are some of your knots, those actions or attitudes that prevent you from being freely yourself?

We also have moss. Moss grows when a log is no longer fully alive, it's not moving. I had moss growing on me, in me. For years I harboured anger. It prevented me from moving forward, it prevented me from being fully alive. What is some of the moss in your life?

A tough outer shell. Really? Do I want Jesus to crack me open and free me? Can I, like the leper, say, "Jesus, you can crack me open", and hear him say, "I do choose".

The knots and moss and shell are the superficial. They are not the real me.

We turn back to our poem.

He caresses me  
With tongues  
Of love and grace  
Some of the unreal  
Evaporates  
Bit by bit  
All that is not essential  
Becomes ash  
As His burning love  
Frees me  
Of all that is false.

All that is not essential becomes ash ... as his burning love frees me from all that is false.

Soon the log  
Begins to glow  
The fire,  
Now within it

And around it...  
It becomes a glowing ember  
Having shed all  
That could not transmit  
The light  
The warmth  
Of Fire.

God within us and around us. We are not just made clean; we the log,  
begin to transmit the light, the warmth of Fire, the light, the warmth of God.

It calls me  
To leave all  
And surrender  
To love  
Until  
I am lost  
In Him  
For whom  
I have hungered  
As He – the Fire  
Has hungered  
For me.

Ahh ... surrender to the love of God. Hunger for God ... as God has  
hungered for me.

This is foundational. God hungers for me. God desires me. God desires to  
be united to me.

The ash has fallen away from the log, from the leper, from us.

What is left is the Light. We become one with the Light - united in the Light.  
The Light is God. We become united to that Light we name in the Nicene  
Creed: God of God, Light of Light, True God Of True God.

In discovering that we are united to the Light, we discover who we are in  
our essence. The word essence comes from the Latin root, "esse",  
meaning "To be". Our deep level name tells of our essential meaning and

purpose. Essence and essential are from the same root esse - and our essential essence is being is one with God. To get in touch with our essence is to get in touch the self that God created us to be. The more we are ourselves, the more we are one with God. We are who God called by Name.

Called by Name.

Come and begin to discover your Name, the Name God gave you, The name that speaks of your deep inner self, that speaks of your essential meaning and purpose in the world. The Name God gave you is different. It isn't like Michael, Helen, John. The names of some people I know are AWE, BROTHER, BELOVED SON, PEACEMAKER, HEALER, LISTENER, LAUGHING ONE, RECONCILER, GENTLEMAN.

AWE - is the Name of a friend who is particularly enthusiastic and creative.

LISTENER - is the Name of a woman who realized that in her quiet way she had listened to others all her life, especially those with a mental illness.

ONE WHO BRINGS JOY THROUGH LAUGHTER - is the Name of a woman whose contagious laughter brought joy to all who heard her.

Let me give you an example. I realized after my Father died that his Name was GENTLEMAN. Throughout my life, people would come up to me and tell me what a gentleman my father was. As a child my friends told me they loved to call me and have my Father answer the phone, "Hello dear. Just a moment dear. I'll get her for you." He always held the door, or a chair, and drove us around. He always treated people with such great respect. He didn't "babysit" my daughters. He "little-lady" sat them, and later when they were life-guards, he picked them up at six in the morning to drive them to the pool; that is, after stopping at Tim Hortons to pick up donuts for the whole staff. Even at the end of his life when he had Alzheimer's, he would greet me, albeit, several times in a few moments, "What can I do for you, dear?" and reach for the chair to help me sit down. Even at the very end of his life when he was lost in that nether world of Alzheimer's, the staff would tell me, "Your Father is such a GENTLEMAN". "GENTLEMAN". That was his Name. He lived it in every situation in his life.

What is your Name?

COME Wednesday evening, February 25. Don't limit yourself to the knots, and the moss. Be cracked open, and begin to discover your essential Name, the Light of God that is in you (capital L), and the light (small l) that is you.

We have heard about Jesus healing the leper and having the ash of his illness fall away, we heard about the Ash of Ash Wednesday - and how our spirit, our true self is left, we heard about our Name, and how it speaks to our true meaning and purpose, and we recognized ourselves as the log in transformation to union with God.

I'll reread the poem so you can appreciate it from the beginning to the end.

### *Union*

*An open fire  
Fascinates  
I know  
Instinctively  
I am the log  
God's love - the fire  
For my transformation  
To free  
The real me.*

*At first  
Only the surface is touched.  
Little changes,  
Some of the knots  
Some of the moss  
Is charred away  
Then the bark  
My tough outer shell  
Now  
The fire  
Begins to find  
Something more  
Something real  
Mixed  
With all the superficial*

*He caresses me  
With tongues  
Of love and grace  
Some of the unreal  
Evaporates  
Bit by bit  
All that is not essential  
Becomes ash  
As His burning love  
Frees me  
Of all that is false*

*Soon the log  
Begins to glow  
The fire,  
Now within it  
And around it...  
It becomes a glowing ember  
Having shed all  
That could not transmit  
The light  
The warmth  
Of Fire*

*It calls me  
To leave all  
And surrender  
To love  
Until  
I am lost  
In Him  
For whom  
I have hungered  
As He – the Fire  
Has hungered*

*For me.*

**Amen**