

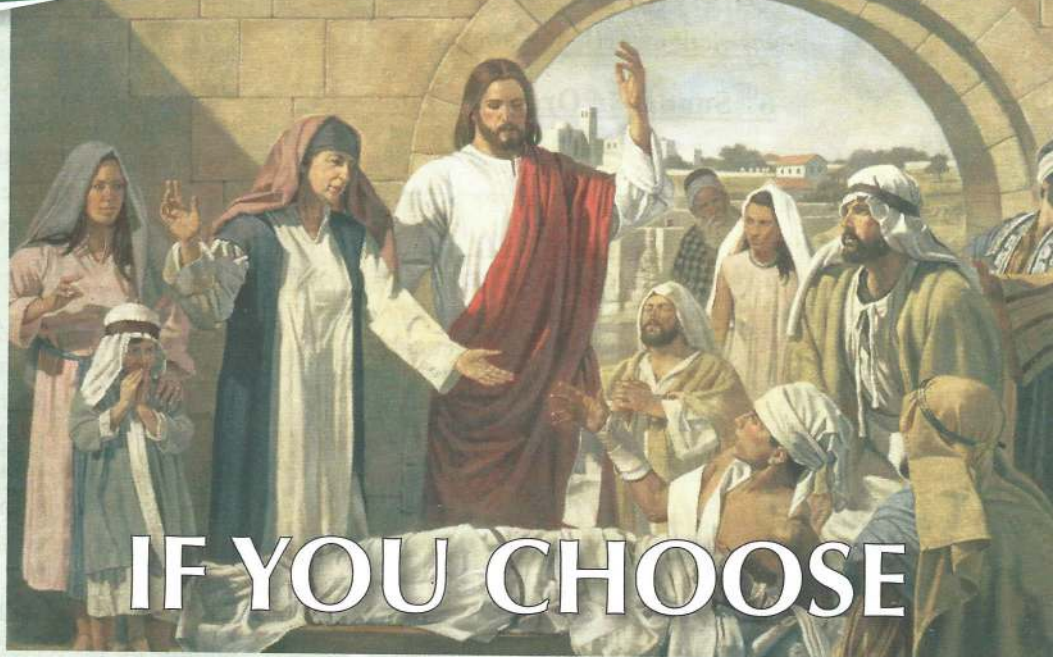
# Parish Newsletter

6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME | 11 FEBRUARY 2018  
YEAR B | ISSUE 11

As I read this week's Gospel, my mind goes to what seems like a thousand bedtimes and farewells that I have witnessed over the years. I have seen grace, nobility, family at its best – I have also seen what is fractured and broken in a family held up painfully to the light in a time of sickness. Writing these words I ponder on what the leper says, "If you want to...you can cure me." Stretching out his hand and touching him, Jesus says, "Of course I want to! Be cured!"

As life progresses with far less surety and answers to the questions of life, it is a complete mystery to me how some are healed and others are not. How does Jesus choose, and where, and why? At times he will stretch out his hand, and at other times he seems to withhold it. It is all so easy in the Gospel. But why the leper, and not my friend/father/mother/sister/brother? Why the mother-in-law of Simon, as we saw last week, and not the numberless others across the ages who have also lived with illness and pain? Why – do you not want to heal ... Lord?

So many questions. And yet we all see the miracles that do come at such times – the daily wonder of connection in the midst of a world that pushes us towards isolation and tells us that everything is a choice



## IF YOU CHOOSE

and we are autonomous beings. The marvels of friendship and neighbourliness that cover us like a comforting blanket at those broken points of life. We're very "good" at funerals, particularly in rural Ireland – food, attending, stewarding, car

**Love is never defeated,  
and I could add, the history  
of Ireland proves it.**

– St John Paul II

parking – all just "happens". Not so good at the follow-up contact. I don't let myself off the hook on that one and I do not let Jesus off the hook for the way he sometimes chooses.

And yet I have seen real beauty in a time of pain and loss. I see and hear real talk around a loved one's sickbed. Words of blessing, grace, and light and even as the body may break – wounds become doorways,

scars become sacred maps and tears become pools of gladness as sorrow and joy intermingle in a wondrous way. There is still something fiercely intact and persistently whole at these times.

Maybe the "robes" of traditional Church ritual don't match so well these days, the ability to even pray formally far more hesitant, but there is enough faith in us to live in the light, towards the light and to become light bearers to one another.

– Tom Cox

### THIS WEEK (12–18 FEBRUARY)

- 12 **Mon** St Damian
- 13 **Tue** St Catherine of Ricci
- 14 **Wed** ASH WEDNESDAY
- 15 **Thur** St Sigfrid of Vaxjo
- 16 **Fri** St Onesimus, bishop and martyr
- 17 **Sat** 7 Founders of the Order of Servites
- 18 **Sun** FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

### NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS



Genesis 9:8-15  
Psalm 24:4-9  
1 Peter 3:18-22  
Mark 1:12-15

### Reflection

What is your attitude toward people who are sick? Try to reflect the interior feeling of Jesus when he was moved to pity?

### Lesson

Stories of healing show that God is mighty and also very loving.

### Prayer

Lord, teach us the value of suffering, and enable us to reach out with compassion. Amen.