

## Not Untouchable or Invisible

**Intro.** This week past I visited a woman who was dying from cancer, not COVID. Her family asked for the sacrament of anointing. She had a good, long life and was ready to meet the Lord. An important part of the sacrament is touch; the ancient tradition of laying on of hands invoking the Holy Spirit and tracing the sign of the cross on the forehead and on the hands. In this sacrament it is difficult **not** to touch the person so I have to be careful.

**I.** Because of COVID, we are discouraged from much of the usual human touch we like and need: handshakes, hugs, kisses. Fist and elbow bumps and other gestures while necessary now, cannot replace the real touch of another human being. The Lord knew that. When he healed, he usually touched the sick person. But in this healing, he went too far. *Way too far.* He touched a man with leprosy, a very contagious disease and in that culture the man was

also ritually unclean. Meaning anyone who touched him would be *also* unclean and also unable to go to the temple without an elaborate purification process. Because of the COVID, we know all about washing and purification to avoid infection. We do it to keep each other safe until.

**Concl.** What the Lord did was heal *a man*, not just a disease; he gave him back his life. The lesson I think is for us to see each other as a **person**, a neighbor; not poor or a different skin color or political party. This can be as crazy as the Lord touching a man with leprosy. But he did. So can we. **In doing this, we can heal the diseases of prejudice, racism and hatred in our world.**

Fr. Michael Pendergraft,  
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