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Thursday's Gospel: Icon of Hope

Gospel for Thursday in the 1st Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk* 1:40-45)

And a leper came to him beseeching him, and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. And he sternly charged him, and sent him away at once, and said to him, "See that you say nothing to any one; but go, show yourself to the

priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to the people.” But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

Commentary

Many people today don't want to kneel. They fail to realize that this gesture opens the door of hope for us. Today's Gospel passage offers us a wonderful lesson of humility and hope from a leper. The leper from Galilee acknowledges his own wretchedness, and presents his wounds at the feet of Jesus. It is this acceptance of his great neediness that leads him to kneel before Jesus of Nazareth who, although he doesn't

realize it, is the incarnate Word of God.

Kneeling also means recognizing that I am not alone in my hardships, that there is someone who can free me from my uncleanness, someone to whom I can entrust my nothingness and neediness. A person who kneels is the best icon of hope.

Kneeling at Jesus' feet means acknowledging that only He can make my life righteous. We want to kneel down frequently: every morning and every night, as soon as we get up and before we go to bed. We also want to kneel when we are in front of the Body and Blood of Christ each day at Mass, when the bell rings during the elevation of the sacred species. And also in front of the priest in the sacrament of Penance, where like the leper we can say: *If you want to, you can make me clean.* For we want to hear Christ's

voice telling us: *Yes, I want to, be clean.*

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