

Call to Prayer: Micah 6:8

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Reflection:

To contract leprosy in medieval Assisi was more than a diagnosis; it marked the end of a person's way of life. Lepers were required to wear special clothing, live apart from the community and ring bells to warn others of their location. To be a leper was to be a walking infection, an outcast, a nonperson in the eyes of society.

Before his conversion, Francis despised lepers; their illness and poverty frightened and repelled him. Shortly after his conversion, Francis heard a leper's bell while traveling. In the past, he would have turned away. Moved by love and mercy through his own fear, Francis hurried toward the leprous man, gave alms, embraced and kissed him. Francis transcended the label, 'leper,' to see the face of God in the man standing before him.

- Who are the modern day lepers?
- What labels do I place on people that keep me from seeing them as created and loved by God?

Prayer:

One: Give us eyes to see beyond the labels we carry. May we know one another as children of God regardless of age, diagnosis, class, race, culture, ideology or country.

All: Make me know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths.

One: Give us ears to hear the voices of those we are poor and outcast. May we run toward them, as did Francis with the leper to meet their needs and hopes.

All: Make me know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths.

One: Give us hands to serve those we encounter daily. In our places of work, school, and play and in our homes, let us be a presence for peace, kindness and unity.

All: Make me know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths.

One: Give to your people your Spirit of Peace. Still all violence and destruction that we may live in harmony with each other and with your good creation.

All: Make me know your ways, O Lord. Teach me your paths.

Closing: (together)

Ever gracious Creator God, we are grateful for the life of Francis of Assisi. Inspire in us his love of peace, care for the poor and protection of creation. Amen.