

Reflection

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For a moment, let's go back to yesterday's amazing reading from Isaiah 58 as a context for today's reflection.

"If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; if you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted ... *Then* your light shall break forth like the dawn and your wound shall quickly be healed. ... *Then* you shall call and the Lord will answer, you shall cry for help, and the Lord will say, "Here I am!"

Now let's consider today's Gospel from this perspective.

Jesus, the *Light* of God's face, is "immediately recognized." The people knew God's love and mercy in the words and actions of Jesus. They knew what to do next.

They acted to "satisfy the afflicted," imitating Jesus' own compassion as they "scurried about ... to bring in the sick on mats to wherever he was."

There is a sense of urgency and concern in these towns that received Jesus' presence. They "begged him that they might touch" the tassel on his cloak and their hope was realized in the healing of their loved ones, friends and neighbors.

The writer of a reflection on this passage suggests that, "This nervous energy bespeaks an entire community in need of the mercy and reassurance which comes from above. ... In times of distress, the Lord's people acutely need prophets: people who *convince us of the presence of Jesus in the midst* of great confusion and clamor."

What a description of where we are as a nation and as a world community.

I hear discouragement, even desperation, as people experience the levels of division, bitterness, neglect of those most in need, loss of courage to do justice and hopelessness that any real change will happen for the common good.

So, do we know what to do next as the people in Jesus time did?

They took action. They did what they *could* for those they were able to reach. They went to God in Jesus, the source of real change, real power for good, and put their trust and their hope *there*. They knew their need, they begged for healing.

Should we not do the same? This is a time for deep discernment. Who and what shall we bring to Jesus for healing?

We pray, we pray for every kind of healing.

It was a profound time of prayer for me to ask, “What is the healing I need to beg for at this time?” We might begin with our own nearsightedness, our own timidity and our own sense of entitlement. We pray to *respond* honestly and courageously when even a small measure of light comes to us. And we do not cease to pray for healing of the ills in all of society.

We take action. We become informed and deliberate deeply on our decisions for the coming elections both for proposals as well as candidates. We continue to sign petitions and write letters to support the common good. We commit to *refusing* to contribute by word or action to the negativity around us. It is a discipline of our times, to carefully choose what and when to post, forward, or send messages.

We, a people of the Beatitudes, look to peacemakers and prophets, just as the people of the Galilean countryside did. So, what is the healing **you** beg for today – so *then* you will be a bearer of healing Light?