

Reflection

Monday February 5, 2024,

Betty Leon, IHM

Both scripture passages today reveal ways that God's *Presence* is with the people. They show God's enduring desire to "dwell among us." From the Hebrew scripture it was a presence made visible by the cloud in the holy of Holies. In Jesus's time, it is through his own Real in-the-flesh presence, teaching and healing. He proclaimed, "The Kingdom of God is at hand... It is in your midst."

Over the centuries people wanted to go to the Holy Land to walk in the footsteps of the patriarchs and prophets and to go where Jesus lived and ministered.

The Gospels take us there in stories from towns up and down the Sea of Galilee. Yesterday we were in Capernaum and today we cross over to Gennesaret.

Many of us have had the blessing of visiting the Holy Land.

On my Jubilee trip in 2008, we resided by the Sea of Galilee the first week. After returning from the sites of the day, we'd come around a bend and the Sea would come into view, a jewel between the hills. On the last day before leaving I stood gazing at the Sea and the countryside, and said in my spirit, "I see why You didn't want to leave here."

Yes, we dream of not just walking in those places, but to *be* those people in the Gospel, joining the crowd seeking healing. They seemed eager to do whatever it took to get to the healer. And Jesus simply receives them.

At other times, however, Jesus' asks the person before him, a curious question: "**Do you want to be healed?**" I wonder what is being asked. Is it faith? I don't know. Could it be about the consequences of the healing? What if the person was aware that being healed would demand significant changes in their life? The adage "Be careful what you pray for" might apply.

For example: What if the disabled person realized that if healed, they had to take responsibility for their life, mend relationships and find work? They would have to decide-Do I want this no matter what? Is it worth it? Can I do it?

I'm also thinking of it from my experience in the Addiction and Recovery Community. Once a Social Worker who took clients to a Treatment Center heard the leader tell a full room, that only 20% of them would actually *get* healthy and *stay* clean and sober. Why would that be true? Recovery means that nearly everything in your life must change attitudes, habits, relationships, responsibilities, and so on. Many say, "Yes, having a power greater than myself *with* me, I'm willing." and others say, "I can't do it, I can't change."

Are we so far from that with our own *deeply set patterns* of thoughts, attitudes and behaviors? We decry the extreme polarization in society. And lack of civility. Yet, what happens *inside* when we hear differing perspectives on issues about which we have strong feelings? What happens to relationships if we fear judgement for an opinion? How do we allow making someone "other" due to their culture or personality? *When* does "entitlement" convert to respectful and attentive listening?

We talk of Transformation for the *future*, yet for that to occur, we may need some deeply honest reflection on the healings needed in the *present*. Often, we more truthfully face our limits and wounds in times of reflection, in retreat, or through an unexpected event that snaps us to attention. How do I respond then: to what is beyond my control, to what is not what I asked or hoped for, or to what is most likely for my ultimate good, and for growth in holiness?

That is- am I willing to cooperate with a deeper healing? We may want to have an honest conversation with Jesus... with Jesus as the Healing Word- *present* here and now. We may then, hear the call to trust our experience of his faithful Presence and his merciful love throughout our lives. Jesus, we pray for the grace

to be able to answer your question humbly, truthfully, and gratefully. “Do you, Do you, want to be healed?”