

January 11, 2008
Friday after the Epiphany

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

1 John 5:5-13

Psalm 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20

Luke 5:12-16

Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I do will it. Be made clean."

I read a reflection on this gospel that talked about Jesus' vulnerability. Vulnerable means capable of being wounded. When we allow our self to be vulnerable, we put our self at risk for hurt. Jesus put himself in harm's way by touching the leper. I had not really thought much about Jesus allowing himself to be vulnerable. I was always captured by Jesus' willingness to surrender and to serve, to do the work of his Father. Vulnerability is such a deeply human response. Thinking about Jesus in this way opens the door to knowing him in a different way. It also opens the door to a deeper relationship between us. Instead of standing in awe at the healing power of Jesus, today I take notice of the willingness of this quiet man to stand up against the cultural norms and risk everything—companionship, friends, a place to sleep, any connection with other human beings. I remember the early days of the HIV virus. We were all scared of 'catching' the virus and out of ignorance and self-protection we isolated those afflicted. I remember Ryan White and his fight to attend school. I remember how he was ostracized, probably just like the lepers of Jesus' day. Exposing ourselves to unknown diseases is a very physical kind of vulnerability. But Jesus went beyond that, he spoke to a Samaritan Woman and let her know that God's love included her as well. He took the side of an adulterous woman against the upstanding men in the community. He took personal risk everywhere he turned. Who could know more what it is like to be isolated and ostracized? Jesus can be my companion as I am called to reach out to those on the fringe of society and he can be my companion when I am the one feeling isolated and outside the norm of the day.

When we were children, we used to think that when we were grown-up we would no longer be vulnerable. But to grow up is to accept vulnerability... To be alive is to be vulnerable.

Madeleine L'Engle

Lard, where have I tried to escape being vulnerable?