Various: For the Sick (Mk 3:7-12)

(*parallels* Mt 4:24-25,15-21; Lk 6:17-19)

**WOUNDED HEALER**

Jesus “had cured so many that all who were afflicted in any way were crowding forward to touch him”, says Mark (Mk 3:10). “Those who were suffering from diseases and painful complaints of one kind or another, the possessed, epileptics (literally, lunatics), the paralysed, were all brought to him, and he cured them”, says Matthew (Mt 4:24).

“Everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him because power came out of him that cured them all”, says Luke (Lk 6:19), who launches immediately into the Beatitudes. The sick, poor and needy are the very ones who are brought by Jesus, the healing Saviour, into God’s kingdom, as he proclaims in the Beatitudes.

Luke comments, “People tormented by unclean spirits were also cured” (Lk 6:18). Mark adds that Jesus warned the unclean spirits strongly not to make him known (cf. Mk 3:12). According to Matthew (12:17), his avoidance of publicity for his work of healing was to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah (42:1-4), of the Suffering Servant of God.

The first Christians found the meaning of Jesus’s life and activity through the Old Testament. The Prophet Isaiah describes the Suffering Servant as “a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering ... and yet ours were the sufferings he bore, ours the sorrows he carried ... On him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through his wounds we are healed” (Is 53:3-5).

In Jesus, Christians see a man and God. We see in him a man’s needs: when wounded to death he needed healing and saving. Everyone needs healing. Also, everyone needs to be forgiven, because we have all wounded ourselves morally. But there was no sin in Jesus.

We see in Jesus also God and his gifts. God heals, forgives and saves. This is Jesus in action, as the gospels portray him. God acts in the actions of Jesus, the compassionate healer.

We are all called, in Jesus, to be wounded healers. It is beyond our human ability to be compassionate. We can only pray for it from the “God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness.”

Compassion enables us to forgive others and to heal them. We forgive when we recognise the sins of others in our own heart and then level with them as a brother or sister. We heal when we realise that the wounder wounds himself, the healer heals himself, and the wounded person who survives his wounds is best able to heal someone else.