

# Reflection: The Leper

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The Leper

Luke 5: 12-15

The man Jesus cured of leprosy was an outcast, marginalised by society. When everyone else had shunned him, Jesus reaches out to him and touches him. He shows us to extend a hand and give people back their dignity and humanity. He shows us that it's not enough to listen and be moved. We need to make solidarity, we need to extend our hands permanently to the excluded.



I recently returned to Ayacucho in the Peruvian Sierra to meet victims of political violence.

It is awfully harrowing to hear a mother tell how she lost her son in a police raid, a father who saw his wife murdered, a boy who can't see his father because he is unjustly imprisoned.

Ten years on from the end of the conflict, the wounds are still open and reconciliation is still pending.

I have also returned to Jesus' stories to search, from the perspective of the victims and the excluded, for guidance towards true reconciliation.

Even when Jesus wanted to keep the miracle a secret the news got out through the media. The man that was healed couldn't keep it to himself and he found communicators on his way that helped him tell his story of re-humanisation.

We are witnesses to many miracles of reconciliation in our communities, but often we deal with them as if they were something from another world. We need to recover our enthusiasm for communicating reconciliation, making stories come alive, making visible, collective memories.

Peace and reconciliation are only possible if we make them visible, by putting them into public awareness - for citizens to talk about them and recognise themselves in the suffering and hope of the excluded.