

OCTOBER 13, 2019
Sunday of the 28th Week in OT
Luke 17: 11-19

BE GRATEFUL

A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet. He held up a sign which read, "I am blind, please help." There were only a few coins in the hat – spare change from folks as they hurried past. A man was walking by. He took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat. He then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. Then he put the sign back in the boy's hand so that everyone who walked by would see the new words. Soon the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy. That afternoon, the man who had changed the sign returned to see how things were. The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?" The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way." I wrote, "Today is a beautiful day, but I cannot see it." Both signs spoke the truth. But the first sign simply said the boy was blind, while the second sign conveyed to everyone walking by how grateful they should be to see.... Nick Ortner, www.thetappingsolution.com

In our readings today, we hear about giving praise and thanks to our generous God for all the benefits we received. In our first reading, we heard the Syrian General Naaman honors God for his cure from leprosy at the instructions of the prophet Elisha. Naaman "immersed himself seven times in the Jordan River and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean." It also leads him to worship and give "sacrifice to any god except the Lord." In our second reading, St. Paul acknowledges his faith, love and confidence in God, and the salvation received from Christ which he lived, preached and shared unceasingly to all peoples.

In our gospel, Jesus cures ten lepers but only one returns to give thanks; that's why He asked: "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" then Jesus said to the Samaritan, 'Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.'"

There is a very significant fact that the gospel is showing us: the unusual encounter between two peoples who had been divided for centuries. Jews and Samaritans had no relations and communications with one another even though Samaria was in the central part of Judea. They were openly unfriendly, unsympathetic and hostile whenever their paths crossed. But in our gospel today, we see one rare exception - a Samaritan leper is with the company of nine Jewish lepers. We see here that sometimes adversity forces people to drop their walls, fences and barriers or to forget their prejudices to one another for one common good. All of them, Jews and Samaritan lepers made a bold request not for healing, but they asked for mercy: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

The word *mercy* literally means "*sorrowful at heart*". But mercy is something more than compassion, or heartfelt sorrow at another's misfortune. Compassion empathizes with the sufferer. But mercy goes further - it removes suffering. A merciful person shares in another's misfortune and suffering as if it were his or her own. And such a person will do everything in his or her power to dispel that misery. Don Schwager, 2019 Servants of the Word, www.dailyscripture.net

But why only one leper out of ten return to show gratitude? According to Pope Francis: "This man was not content with being healed by his faith, but brought that healing to completion by returning to express his gratitude for the gift received, and to be able to give thanks and praise the Lord for what he has done for us is important!" Catholic News Agency, Elise Harris, Vatican City, Oct 9, 2016

My brothers and sisters, when we are grateful, we express gratitude of heart and a thankful disposition which is related to grace, the release of loveliness. When we don't recognize, value and appreciate the mercy, kindness and help shown to us we will be ungrateful and unkind towards others. Ingratitude is nothing but a forgetfulness or a poor return for kindness given to us. And when we are ungrateful, it leads to lack of charity and intolerance towards others, and lead us to complaining, grumbling, discontentment, pride, and presumption.

Let us ask ourselves, how often I have been ungrateful to my parents, pastors, teachers, and neighbors? Do I express gratitude to God for his abundant help and mercy towards me and am I gracious, kind, and merciful towards my neighbor in their time of need and support?

To our children here present, how many times do we say thank you to our parents? When you were still in the womb, your mother and father were so excited to see you. They took care of you, love you more than themselves, and when you grow up until today, they still show their love and care for you. They try their very best to give you what is the best for you. They try their best to be with you and nurture you. They gave you your toys, your iPad, your cellphones, even the comfort of your house, your bed, your food, your clothing, your education. So, how do you show your appreciation? Do you say thank you to them? Concretely, you can show your appreciation to your parents by studying your lesson very well and try your best to get high grades. Follow them, clean your room, fix your bed, arrange properly your toys and other stuff and do your house chores, even if you are tired playing basketball or hockey or doing a lot of things in the school. Don't be mad when your parents ask you to do that. That's the way you can express your appreciation to your parents.

My brothers and sisters, how many times do we say thank you to those who help us, to those close to us, to those who accompany us through life? Often, we take everything for granted, even with God. As we celebrate the Thanksgiving Day, the gospel is reminding us: be thankful for everything not only tomorrow but every day of our lives. It is also important that we, the recipient, always give thanks for favors received and bestowed upon us. In everything, let us always give thanks and let the giver know you value, welcome and appreciate the gift or favor. You can also show, share and give thanks to others by being yourself generous, like Naaman the leper cured of his leprosy. Let us also count our blessings not count the blessings of others and to thank God and others for their awesome and generous gift. Let everyday be a Thanksgiving Day.

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus, may I never fail to recognize your loving kindness and mercy towards me. Fill my heart with love, mercy, compassion and thanksgiving, and free me from ingratitude and dissatisfaction. Help me to count my blessings with a grateful heart and to give thanks in all circumstances. Amen."