

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time – October 12, 2025

(2Kings 5:14-17; Ps. 98:1,2-3,3-4; 2Tim. 2:8-13; Lk. 17:11-19)

Both our first reading and our gospel reading today have occasions of lepers being healed. God works through the prophet Elisha in the first reading and through his Son, Jesus, in the gospel. There once was a nurse who worked for an orthopedic surgeon who shared that when the doctor was moving to a new office across town, she and the receptionist were helping him move his equipment. Among the items she was transporting was the skeleton the doctor used when he wanted to point out a problem area to a patient. She put the skeleton in the front seat of her car, with its bony arm stretched across the back of the drivers seat. She hadn't thought about how this might look to other drivers on the road. As she waited at a red light, the people in the car next to her really stared her down so she rolled down the window and explained, "I'm delivering him to my doctor's office." The other driver leaned out his window and shouted: "I hate to tell you this lady, but I think it's to late." (*Laughter, the Best Medicine, Reader's Digest*) We hope it is not too late for us by the time we turn turn our life over to God the Divine Physician.

In our first reading today Naaman, an officer in the enemy army has come from Syria to be healed by the prophet Elisha from the scourge of leprosy. The King of Israel wanted nothing to do with this enemy officer, but Elisha the prophet, listens to his request and then gives him some special instructions for bathing in the Jordan for his healing. When he eventually follows that instruction he is healed. His flesh becomes like a little child. He recognizes that the God of Israel is the true God and he returns to the prophet to give thanks. Jesus uses this example early in this gospel of Luke when Jesus returns to his home town of Nazareth. They were impressed, but they had little faith in him. Jesus told them that foreigner had more faith than the people of his home town. They took offense...

Today Jesus again comments that, only the foreigner, of those ten lepers, returns to give thanks to God on account of Jesus. It reveals to us God's desire to heal us, to answer our request and how important it is for us to give thanks to God. God uses those times to bring us into relationship with Him. He healed the ten lepers out of generosity – but also to bring them into relationship with God – one of thanksgiving. It reminds me of a parent who gives in to the request of a child for candy, which may not be best for the child, yet the parent wants the child to know their love, that they give good things to the child. The parent wants to develop a relationship with that child and wants the child to trust and turn to him in their need. The parent teaches the child to say thank you – to appreciate it as a gift.

In the same way God wants to develop a relationship with us – for us to realize God's love and that all good things come from him. But that is not the end or the limit of that relationship. God wants us to give him recognition and thanks and appreciate it as a gift. In fact before he died one of the last things Jesus did was to give us the Eucharist and told us to do this in remembrance of him – to not only remember, but to become a part of that action, his offering to the Father. The word Eucharist means “Thanksgiving.” That is why we are here today.

Our Holy Mother, the Church, reminds us to do this each week on Sunday, the day of the Lord's resurrection. In the gospel of John Jesus made himself present to them on several Sundays after his resurrection. Sunday has become the new day of resting in the Lord's presence – of giving our thanks when he makes himself present to us here at the Mass.

We know that Jesus has the power to do what he wills. Here in the Eucharistic species, he gives us his very self. We first enter relationship with Jesus in baptism, so he dwells within us and we are conformed to him.

Here in the Eucharist he nourishes his life within us. We are then sent forth to continue his work in the world – that people might recognize his work, his love through us and give God thanks on our account as this leper did through Jesus and Naaman did through Elisha.

The Sunday before last we learned from Jesus' parable of Lazarus and the rich man how important it is to be in relationship with others. It was through his relationship with Lazarus that the rich man might have entered heaven as a reward at the end of his life. But he failed to recognize his resources as gifts from God to do God's work in sharing with others.

In his second letter to Timothy, St. Paul tells him to remember Jesus. He is the gospel for which Paul is suffering in chains. "But the Word of God is not chained. Therefore I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they too may obtain salvation that is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory... If we persevere we shall also reign with him..."

We have the benefit of knowing Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, hearing his word, seeing his work and receiving his grace – his life in us, that others may recognize him through us and give thanks to God on our account, even as the leper gave thanks to God on account of Jesus and Naaman did on account of the prophet Elisha.

Last Sunday the apostles ask the Lord, "Increase our faith." Today Jesus tells the Samaritan leper, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you." It is through our faith that we recognize God's gifts in our life, that we give thanks to him. And others may give thanks to God on our account, when we help them or lead them to believe in Jesus. Pray each day that God will increase your faith, that he will reward you for coming each Sunday to give thanks and others may give thanks to God because of you. We are currently on a Journey in Faith, may God bless and increase our faith.