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28th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 9 October 2022

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9 October 2022

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reflection by Tony Doran

Introduction

The challenge for the followers of Jesus in every age has been for our faith to be more than just something we put on when it suits us. Rather, it must be something that permeates our whole being. The stories of Naaman the leper and the Samaritan leper ask us whether our faith is merely skin deep.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you healed the lepers.
Lord, have mercy.

You call us to thankfulness.
Christ, have mercy.

You lead us in faith.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

The oration

May your grace, O Lord, we pray,
at all times go before us and follow after
and make us always determined
to carry out good works.

This is a wonderful prayer, succinct yet full to the brim. The first petition sets forth the all-encompassing, all-enveloping role of grace in the life of faith. The praying community asks that God's grace always precede, inspire, uphold and bring to completion every moment and action of the lives of each of us. Stemming from this, we further specify that this all-encompassing grace may work in us to make us unceasingly intent on doing good works. This determination, itself inspired, upheld and completed in grace, is a response in thanksgiving to the freedom that comes from salvation in Christ. (Gerard Moore)

First Reading

2 Kings 5:14-17

In response to his healing from leprosy, Naaman the Aramean, offers praise and worship to the God of the prophet Elisha, the God of Israel.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 97:1-4. R. cf. v. 2

The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

This psalm praises the kingship of God. While God's victory is described very much in terms of military might and conquest witnessed by other nations, perhaps for us this victory is best understood in terms of the salvation which comes when the reign of God is present.

Second Reading

2 Timothy 2:8-13

Paul reminds Timothy of the message of the Gospel: Jesus Christ risen from the dead. Today's reading ends with what was once possibly part of an early Christian hymn reassuring Timothy (and us) of God's faithfulness.

Gospel Reading

Luke 17:11-19

The story of the cleansing of ten lepers highlights Luke's concern for those on the margins over and against the established insider. Samaritans and lepers would have been considered to be well and truly on the outer. The Samaritan leper is saved from his leprosy on the outside, but saved 'on the inside' by his faith in Jesus.

Reflection

At the time of Jesus, there was no cure for leprosy. Once a person contracted it, life became something of a living death. How then could it happen that nine of the ten lepers didn't thank Jesus for their cure? We don't have to stretch our imaginations too much to picture how it could happen. Let's picture how it might happen in our own time.

The first was Miriam, the wife of a shopkeeper. On returning home she found the house in a mess. It was not her husband's fault. He had a business to run. Going back to say thanks was out of the question – for the moment at least.

The second was Aaron, a farmer. The summer had been a very bad one, and the entire harvest was in danger of being lost. But now, the weather forecast was good. Time was precious. There would be plenty of rainy days when he could go back and say thanks.

The third was Saul. When he got back home the family threw a big party for him. They would not hear of him going anywhere. He had been away long enough. It was they who had prevented him from going back to say thanks.

Martha was the fourth. When she got home, her all-time favourite TV show was on, something she had not been able to watch during her isolation. She lost herself in the show. She would go back tomorrow to say thanks. But, of course, tomorrow never comes.

Daniel was the fifth. Prior to his illness he had been a successful businessman. When he got back home, he saw the business was very rundown. Going back to say thank you was low on his list of priorities – making money was much higher. Soon he forgot all about it.

Amos, the sixth, had no home to go to. He was feeling very bitter about his leprosy and about life in general. When he got back he collected some money that was owed to him, went into town, and got drunk. Going back to say thanks never entered his head.

Peter was the seventh. When he got back, he had no job. Then was offered a job interview. Going back to say thanks was not on for the moment.

Anna was the eighth. Now, there was a petrol shortage at that time. She was actually on the way back when she saw a petrol station open. She queued for three hours and was able to fill her car up. Then she went home. It would be a pity to waste petrol on a journey back to say thanks.

Joseph was the ninth. When he got home, he decided to sell his story to a newspaper. There was no time to lose. One of the others might get the same idea and beat him to it...Going back to say thanks had no place in his plans.

Finally, there was Simon. He had several good reasons for not going back. One was especially compelling. He was a Samaritan, and the man who cured him was a Jew. It would not be easy for a Samaritan to thank a Jew. But, being the kind of person he was, he brushed all these reasons aside, and went back to give thanks.

Excuses...some plausible, some petty, some downright shabby. But in nine cases out of ten, they were effective. These excuses prevented those nine people from doing the one thing that cried out to be done.

Nine of the lepers were not able to express gratitude. And what does this tell us?

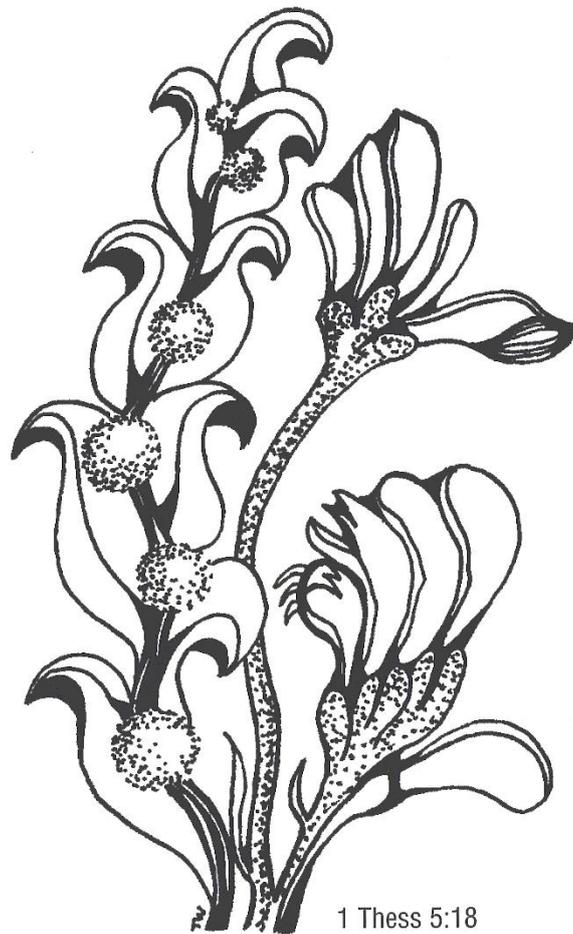
It seems to suggest that that their cure was only skin-deep, if you will pardon the pun! Their leprosy was gone, but nothing else about them had changed. After their bad experience, they returned to their old attitudes, habits, goals, and general shallowness of life. They had learned nothing from their pain. And that was the real tragedy.

It is obvious that the Samaritan learned from his painful experience. He was a completely changed person afterwards, as was Naaman after his cure in the first reading. The other nine lepers were cured physically only. Naaman and the Samaritan were cured both in body and in spirit.

In good times we forget God, even though we continue to pay lip-service.

Even though God is faithful, supremely faithful. But then something in our life – an illness perhaps – brings us to our knees and suddenly we are faced with our own poverty, our own weakness and our own mortality. And this sort of low-point is a moment of decision. It is at this time, that we that we have the opportunity to grow closer to God. Of the ten lepers, it seems that only one – the Samaritan – chose to grow closer to God.

What would we do?



**For all things give
thanks to God.**

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Paul urged Timothy and now he urges us to remember the good news that we will share in the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. In this faith we ask for our needs to be granted.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church, Pope Francis and leaders in the clergy, laity and religious. May they always cherish and protect the Good News entrusted to them by Jesus Christ and handed on through the apostles.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the leaders of nations and economic structures that they will learn and understand the privilege and responsibility that goes with power and make continual efforts to work towards justice and prosperity for all their people.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our community that the gift of gratitude may resound within us every day. May we share the Good News through our witness to the grace that God has given us and that is available to all people.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who are sad and dissatisfied. May they understand that the gift of faith and gratitude is healing and restorative in times of distress.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who are suffering from the effects of war, famine, disease, the pandemic, climate change and other things beyond their control. May the organisations that are able to help them be greeted with gratitude and may our community be generous in support of them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those in our community who are grieving for those who have died. Bring them comfort through the warm hearts of those who care for them.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Bountiful God, through your grace we are able to offer these petitions in faith, knowing that they will be answered through the power of the Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOVK	AOVNG	GA	CWB	CWBII	S&S1
Amazing grace	29			437		450	
Christ Is the world's light					643	467	
For the fruits of this creation				426		488	
Forth in the peace of Christ we go				495	681	489	
Gift of finest wheat				191	685	651	
Great God of mercy						126	
Keep in mind	180			391	730	530	
Now thank we all our God	189			425	755	561	
O Christ, the healer, we have come					759	127	
Our help is from the Lord			105				
Praise and thanksgiving		31					
Praise, my soul, the king of heaven	78				789	588	
Praise the Lord, you heavens, adore him				409	790	583	
Rejoice in the Lord always		75					
Seek, O seek the Lord					802	595	
Seek ye first the kingdom of God	48			456		594	160
There is a longing in our hearts, O Lord						82	
There's a Spirit in the air						623	
There's a wideness in God's mercy					838	624	
We give thanks		105					
We shall draw water	72						
Your hands, O Lord, in days of old						129	

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 97: *The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.*

	CWB	JOBC	LPC
Psalm 97	309	pg 18	pg. 158

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Sing new songs of joy (CWBII, FWS) *Based on Ps 97/98* [Gathering, Recessional]