

Sunday, October 13th, 2019

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

2 KGS 5:14-17; 2 TM 2:8-13; LK 17:11-19

Living with A Grateful Heart

The Psalmist says, 'what shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. (Psalm 116:12-13 NRSV) In this Sunday's readings, two people are saying 'thank you' to God for what he has done for them. In the First Reading, after Naaman had been healed of his leprosy by the Prophet Elisha. He returned to thank the Prophet with gifts, but Elisha refused to take the gifts. Naaman went home (with some earth from Israel) literally pledging to live in perpetual thanksgiving to God by worshiping only him.

In his journey to Jerusalem through Galilee, Jesus encounters ten lepers, who standing at a distance (because of their religious and physical impurity) called out to him for mercy. They surely did not know how it happened that they were completely healed and restored. One of them quickly returned to thank Jesus for his healing. The amazing question from Jesus is, 'were not all ten made whole? How is it that only the foreigner has returned to give thanks to God? This leper-made-whole now draws closer to Jesus, kneels at his feet and thanks him profoundly for God's generosity towards him. Kneeling at Jesus' feet is a sign of humility and worship.

Like Naaman and the Lepers we have all received grace upon grace: Healing, mercy, forgiveness, peace, salvation, job, family, clothing and shelter, good weather and the like. Jesus asks us in return, 'are not all men recipients of God's gifts, where are the rest? As a Catholic, the Eucharist or the Mass offers me that physical and spiritual space to bring my thanks to God for what he continues to do for us in Christ. The word Eucharist simply means 'thanksgiving'. It is a thanksgiving sacrifice to God for his bounty to us. May we learn to appreciate the numerous gifts we receive from God every day and never to forget to render praise to him. Let us learn to emulate the Samaritan who returned to give thanks. What have you received from the Lord? Have you given thanks?