Last week in our Gospel lesson Jesus talked about faith. ***"If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, `Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.*** This week we have 10 Lepers approaching Jesus -at a distance. In those times, a diagnosis of Leprosy was a sentence of death. Lepers were sent out of society, into the wilderness, never to return to a life with family and friends again. Like today, with Cancer, Alzheimer’s, and other afflictions, I’m sure the Lepers of that time and place had faith that one day, they would be cured and be able to return to a normal life.

 The 10 Lepers who approach Jesus, presumably having heard of Him and the works he was doing, have faith that He could heal them and make them whole once again. The healing wasn’t instantaneous, but as they followed the orders that Jesus gave them, setting out to show themselves to the priests, something amazing happened. They were healed. I’m sure they all noticed this. But only one of them who saw that they were healed, turned back to find Jesus and thank him for showing mercy and healing him. We don’t know what happened to the other nine. Did they make it to the priests? Did they take it for granted that a miracle had occurred? Did they remain healed? All we know is only one of them came back to give thanks to Jesus.

 All of us sitting here wouldn’t be here if we didn’t have faith. We all have been through dark passages in our lives, and we all had faith that things would take a turn for the better. Sometimes things would get better, other times tragedy happened. What got us through all our issues was our faith in God. We prayed, we hoped, we cried, sometimes we had to laugh at all the drama surrounding us and wonder, why me? All our lives have been touched by bad things happening to us. What made us strong and helped us survive, was our faith.

 We all have experienced loss of a loved one, a pet, a job, a home, or other things that seemed to turn the lights off on our joy and our hope. I personally had some of these happen to me. But as I look back on these bad times, I’ve come to realize that some of these dark incidents have been a blessing. Losing my home got me out of one of the worst neighborhoods in town. Getting dumped in a relationship was not the end of the world, it led me to realize that I was not to blame, that I was being mentally abused, gaslighted, and that one day I hoped to find someone who would treat me better and love me for myself and all my faults. Despite all the drama, God still loved me and was there to hear my rantings.

 God faithfully is there for us, to hear our petitions, to help us heal our emotional wounds. God faithfully is always on call for us. Do we take this for granted? Or do we turn back and give thanks to God for having mercy on our miserable selves? Faith can move mountains. Faith can heal. God has faith in us. Its up to us to have faith in God. ***Go on your way, your faith has made you well.***

 In Jesus name Amen. *Rev Deacon Mark Kowalski*