

28th Sunday of Ordinary time cycle C

2 Kings 5.14-17, 2 Timothy 2.8-13, Luke 17. 11-19

Man was created to live in a relationship manner. In today's first reading and the Gospel we see the healing of lepers. A person with leprosy had to yell "unclean" and stay away from everyone, one could not even be around their family. To be a leper, if you will, was like being a member of the walking dead. But today's readings are about healing.

We read that there are two key elements: trust and faith. In the first reading Naaman the leper arrived at Elisha's house expecting to be healed. Even though Naaman was uncertain how he would be healed, Naaman followed the instructions from Elisha which not only healed Naaman but also caused a conversion experience that led Naaman to believe in the one true God. Naaman trusted Elisha's instruction.

In today's world I often think we find it difficult to trust. We have full access to media, instant news, we are pulled in multiple directions, with people trying to convince you to believe one way or another. Yet there is one consistent, one loving message which is that of God. We can, should, and must trust in God.

A journey through the Bible shows that people struggled to trust in God. Take a look at how the prophets were treated. Today's readings indicate what happens when one puts their trust in God's hands. Leprosy was fatal, yet today we see two instances of healing. I would like to share a few observations; first, Elisha tells Naaman to wash in the water. I cannot help but think of the symbolism of Baptism.

In verse 13 the lepers cry out, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" The lepers cry out with humility addressing Jesus as Master. The lepers then ask for pity – that is, mercy. Jesus being loving and compassionate told the lepers to go show themselves to the priests, or perhaps another way of saying this would be to say go to my Father's house. The lepers left as directed, they were obedient, they trusted in the words of Jesus. They were indeed healed. They had faith in Jesus.

Faith is "both a gift of God, and a human act by which the believer gives personal adherence to God who invites his response, and freely assents to the whole truth that God has revealed" (CCC). We have free will, we can accept this gift from God or we can reject it. We can choose to trust in God, to surrender to God, and be obedient to God. In choosing to love God and trust in God we then need to accept the guidance God gives to us.

Love and trust is a two way street. The obligation does not belong only to God, rather the obligation falls upon each and everyone of us. We were given the Ten Commandments as a guideline to develop our relationship with God and our neighbor, a how to live guide if you will.

I am always amazed when I read this Gospel passage that only one leper came back and “thanked Him.” Note St Luke identifies him as a Samaritan. The Samaritans and the Jews were like oil and water, they did not mix well together. The Samaritan was grateful for being saved.

Ten lepers appeared before Jesus seeking mercy, trusting Jesus, having faith in Jesus to heal them. After ten are healed only one give thanks. I call upon all of us here today to show gratitude to Jesus Christ for His life, death, resurrection and ascension. To give thanks for this precious gift of the Eucharist we are about to receive.

“The Eucharist is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father, a blessing by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God for all his benefits, for all that he has accomplished through creation, redemption, and sanctification. Eucharist means first of all ‘thanksgiving.’”

I look out here in our parish and see many miracles and gifts to be thankful for, each and everyone of you. As we celebrate the right to life month let us be thankful for life. Life is precious, it is priceless, it is a gift from God. Let us give thanks and celebrate this gift from God. Today’s readings call us to trust in God, to have faith and now my friends we must truly live our faith. We must celebrate life from conception to natural death. It is now our time to cry out, to cry out for the unborn.

Like the example given by Samaritan Leper let’s show our faith in God, trust in God and gratitude to God by living and proclaiming our pro-life faith.