

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

[Reading I: 2 Kgs 5: 14-17](#)

[Responsorial Psalm 98: 1, 2-3, 3-4](#)

[Reading II: 2 Timothy 2: 8-13](#)

[Gospel: Luke 17: 11-19](#)

Readings may be found on the US Bishop's website:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/100922.cfm>

Jesus was known for teaching and healing. He proclaimed the Good News of God's love and mercy and then manifested that love and compassion in healings. The Gospel passage for today shows this mercy on several levels.

Lepers were outcasts of society. Most likely, they did not have what contemporary medicine considers Hansen's disease, for the book of Leviticus states that leprosy could manifest on clothing and walls. It was a dreaded disease that made a person or object unclean. The rules were designed to keep the community safe. Thus, people and objects with biblical leprosy were exiled from the community.

Jesus healed the ten lepers, and as was required by the Mosaic law, Jesus sent them to show themselves to the priests. One, however, was a Samaritan who had a double exclusion. Not only was he excluded from society by leprosy, but he was also excluded from the Temple for being a Samaritan. While the nine went to the Temple to praise God, the Samaritan was not welcome there, so he returned to Jesus to give thanks and praise to God.

The Samaritans lived to the north of Jerusalem, and while originally part of the Israelites, they had intermarried with gentiles and were considered impure. When the people of Judea returned from the Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem, the Samaritans came and offered help in rebuilding the city and the Temple. The Judeans drove them away and considered them unfit for association. (Ezra 4)

Jesus manifested God's limitless mercy and compassion. It went to lepers and a Samaritan. God's love was not limited by any human boundaries. It was available to anyone who asked for help. The Samaritan who returned giving thanks is assured that his faith, his trusting reliance upon God, has brought him salvation.

One other element that this passage highlights is the importance of gratitude. St Ignatius of Loyola understands gratitude to be a primary virtue. In being grateful, one recognizes that God is at work. God continues to create, teach, and impart the Holy Spirit to us. As a person looks at particular events and experiences, one is invited to recognize God at work in her or his life. This awareness opens many opportunities to grow closer to God.

Naaman is an Aramean general who contracted leprosy. A slave girl from Israel had told him the prophet Elisha could cure him. He seeks permission and goes to Elisha, who tells him to wash in the river Jordan. Naaman resists going to the Jordan river. It was not a big nor impressive river. There were bigger and more powerful rivers that could get him clean. After some encouraging conversation, he goes and washes and is cured.

This narrative has two important points. First, appearances are not always the best evaluation of a situation. While some things seem ordinary, God can and does work through them. The stance of faith is trust in God and not the materials that God has made. Secondly, God's love and compassion are not limited to some people. God will respond to all who sincerely seek God's way.

Naaman shows his commitment to the God of Israel. He requests that he be allowed to take loads of dirt to his home. The ancient assumption was that gods were tied to specific geographical places. One had to be on the god's territory to worship that god properly. Israel had long recognized that God was not limited to a particular area. God had saved them in Egypt, led them through the desert, and brought them to a new land. The God of Israel is the universal God. Even though Naaman was limited in his ability to understand and understand things, Elisha accepted him where he was and entrusted him to God's providence.

Timothy is reminded that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises as manifested by his being a descendant of David. Since Jesus fulfills God's promises, one can trust and put one's faith in Jesus. Those who have died with Jesus (been baptized) also share in the resurrected life of Jesus. Jesus has incorporated the baptized into his life. Even if a person turns from Jesus, Jesus will never abandon those who belong to him. This faith is foundational to believers.

Reflection Questions:

Who are the outcasts in our society? How can we pray for them?

Have you experienced God using the ordinary to work in you?

Recall a time when you experienced overflowing gratitude. What impact did it have on your life?

How is your life different as a baptized person? To what did you die? What newness of life are you living?

Themes:

Healing

Universal gift of salvation

God working with people where they are

The blessedness of the ordinary

New life in Christ

Prayer Suggestions:

For the Church: that God will fill us with a spirit of gratitude for all the blessings and gifts which we have received and help us to be open to new gifts each day

For healing: that God will bring healing and restore wholeness to all who are ill, who are having or recovering from surgery, or have experienced abuse

For the grace to begin again: that God will free us from old ways of thinking and helps us to grasp opportunities to start anew when God opens new possibilities for life growth

For an appreciation of the ordinary: that we may be open to God's presence in the daily events of our lives and experience God at work in our lives and relationships