

28th Sunday C 2013

2 KINGS 5:14-17, 2 TIMOTHY 2:8-13, LUKE 17:11-19

Homilies are vehicles for breaking open the Word of God. First read the Sunday readings at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/101313.cfm>

*And one of them, realizing he had been healed,
returned, glorifying God in a loud voice;
and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him.*

That was our Samaritan. The others went on to show themselves to the priests. It wasn't as if the others hadn't had faith in Jesus. They had all called out to him in hopes of him healing them. They even called him "Master", a term that only his own disciples called him. And yet it was the Samaritan that returned, that single Samaritan.

That meant that the others must have been Jews. Having been healed of their leprosy, they could go to their priests and be reunited to their community.

The Samaritan?... not so much. Even cleansed of leprosy, he would still have been *persona non grata* in that Jewish neighborhood. When all the ten had leprosy, there was an equality about their despised condition. Not now.

How much has human nature changed in the past 2000 years? We still work way too hard at despising each other, at judging each other. We need to examine ourselves more closely when we say or hear the words, "those people". Who are "those" people? Who are our lepers today? Guesses entail gender, race, religion, immigrant status, sexual orientation, welfare status, homelessness, disability, political affiliation, criminal history. The list can go on and on.

But, Jesus came to save all of us. His ministry to the lowly and despised should always remind us to love the outcast, and to encourage us to have hope when we find ourselves to be outcast.

But there is something more going on here than just the lowly being saved.

Where was Jesus going when he was hailed by the lepers? He was headed to Jerusalem. By that we mean he was headed to Calvary.

The Jesus the Samaritan encountered was a Jesus who loved and who had compassion, even while headed to his cross.

The Samaritan's response was a grateful one. He demonstrated loudly his gratitude and threw himself prostrate before the Master's feet. This action speaks of more than just gratitude. This is the gratitude that moves people to surrender themselves to the source of their joy.

When the Samaritan dedicated himself to Jesus through prostration, he was told to *"Stand up and go."* Go where? Which way? Jesus' way, the way to Jerusalem, the way of the cross.

The Samaritan is our role model. He had faith. He had hope. He experienced the divine presence. His gratitude moved him into discipleship.

We here have faith. We have hope. We come here in expectant anticipation of communion with the divine Son. Do we allow our hearts to be moved with gratitude? Do we allow that gratitude to prompt us to follow the way, the way of the cross?

The way may be marked with much suffering, but its hallmark is that, even while suffering, we can experience the eternal love of God and even taste heavenly joy. It is by receiving and sharing this gift that we become disciples of Christ.

When we prepare to leave here today, may we gratefully remember Jesus' words, *"Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."*