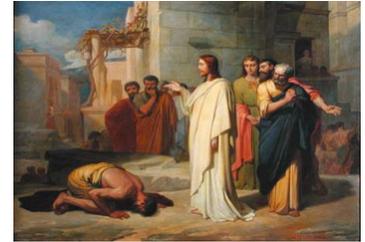


Homily for the 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time
St. Thomas the Apostle Church – West Springfield, Massachusetts
October 13, 2019



Scripture Readings: [2 Kings 5:14-17](#) ✕ [Psalm 98:1-4](#) ✕ [2 Timothy 2:8-13](#) ✕ [Luke 17:11-19](#)

All of us have been given great graces and gifts in our lives. Sometimes though, we fail to recognize that God is the ultimate source of all the graces and gifts that we possess and have received. It is that recognition that distinguished the Samaritan leper from the other nine who were cured in today's Gospel passage.



All ten of the lepers were equally healed of a disease that had, probably for years, left them horribly disfigured and physically and socially challenged. However, only one of them, finding himself cured, turned back to praise God. He threw himself at the feet of Jesus and thanked Him for this cure. He thanked Jesus, but he praised God. The Samaritan leper, one who was looked down upon by the people because of his origin and because of his affliction, was the one who recognized that God's grace was at work in his healing. It was not the Scribes or the Pharisees or the self-righteous.

Jesus praised this man's special insight. But it is important to note that Jesus didn't want thanks for Himself; He didn't complain that no one thanked Him. Instead, He asked, "Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?"

That is why He said, "Your faith has saved you." This leper had the true vision of faith; he recognized God at work in what had happened to him, in the amazing way that he had been graced and gifted and healed by God.

All of us are called to that same vision of faith; to recognize and to acknowledge God at work in all the experiences of grace that bless us in the course of our everyday lives. We are also called to recognize that others experience that same grace, even those with whom we disagree, those whom we don't particularly like, even those whom we may deem to be ungodly.

In an age where there seems to be nothing but intolerance between people who think differently from one another or approach life with different ideologies, it is imperative that we call to mind the reality that all of us are created by God and made in the image of God. All people experience the grace of God and all people are vessels and instruments of that same grace, regardless of their origin, their health, their political or religious ideologies, or their faith.

Throughout Scripture, Jesus used the stories and lives of foreigners, the ill, and others that His people looked down upon, to show that all people are made in God's image and that God works through the lives and actions of all people, especially those who struggle to get through life.

Jesus' message to the leaders and people of His time was clear: all people are creatures of God, made in the image of God, and need to be respected and loved as such. Jesus gives us that same message today. This doesn't mean we always agree with everyone; it doesn't mean that we simply accept or look away from bad behavior. But recognition of and respect for the presence of God in every person is a necessary and basic element in our relationship with all people, in our answering the call to evangelize, in our efforts to journey together, in faith, toward the kingdom of heaven. ✕