

## 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – 8:00am Mass

2 Kings 5: 14-17

Psalms 98: 1-4

2 Timothy 2: 8-13

Luke 17: 11-19

Good Morning Everyone!

Today is the beginning of my 72<sup>nd</sup> year! Today is my 71<sup>st</sup> birthday. And I know I don't look a day over 70, so there you are.

If I were to ask you "What is the most important moment of your life?" I'm sure I would be given different responses. Some of you, perhaps, would say the day that you got married, others maybe the day you had your first child, or when you graduated from college, or you began your career, whatever that may be. But none of those answers, as important as they are in your life, none of them are correct.

The most important moment in our life is the moment you and I were baptized, when we became a child of God. Everything we do, every part of us, is connected to that moment. Many of you were baptized as infants, so you don't remember when it took place. Some of you were baptized later in life; some are converts to the Catholic faith, so you remember very well the moment that you were baptized. But whenever it occurred for us as an infant, as an adult, as a teenager, whenever, it is the most important moment of our life. Because everything changed for us in that moment; we were no longer just a human being, we became the very temple of God, as God came to dwell within us; as He calls us now His children, and Jesus speaks to us as His brothers and sisters. There is a familial relationship that now exists out of baptism.

Today's Gospel deals with baptism. And you say, "How is that Father? We have ten lepers that were healed by Jesus. One returns to give thanks. What does this have to do with baptism?" It has everything to do with baptism! When the ten lepers approach Jesus they are symbolic of a sinful world that comes before the Lord and cries out, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" Is that not what we do when we come into baptism? When a sinful world approaches the waters of baptism, is this not what we are saying? Jesus, Master, have pity on us! And they looked at Jesus and they desired to be healed, of the horrific disease of leprosy, which was the most tragic disease one could have at the time of Jesus. What is leprosy symbolic of? It is symbolic of the horror of sin, and what sin does to us, mentally, physically, spiritually; every part of our being is touched by the tragedy of sin as symbolized by the ten lepers. And they're asking Jesus to free them from this. That is what happens when you and I approach the waters of baptism. Jesus, Master, heal us of the disease of sin.

And then, Jesus heals the ten lepers, does He not? Symbolic of the waters of baptism being poured over us, or as we are immersed into the waters, in that moment we are healed of the tragedy of sin, we become a new creation; we become a child of God. But as the story progresses, what happens? Only one returns to give Him thanks! My brothers and sisters, you know the word Eucharist means "thanksgiving". So every time you and I come into the Liturgy of the Mass, we are celebrating a liturgy of thanksgiving from beginning to end. And throughout this liturgy we are to be reconnected to the moment of our baptism, which allows us to be here and to participate in the Eucharist itself, to receive Jesus; His Body and Blood. Baptism allows us to be here, as true members of the Church, as members of God, as brothers and sisters of Jesus. Baptism allows us to fully participate in everything we're doing in

## **28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time – 8:00am Mass**

2 Kings 5: 14-17

Psalm 98: 1-4

2 Timothy 2: 8-13

Luke 17: 11-19

this Mass. Thus, this Liturgy is a moment, is a time of thanksgiving. Thank you God for what you gave us in our baptism and out of that great sacrament enables me to be here and to continue to experience the fullness of who you are as God in my life! That is what we're doing; we are continuing to celebrate, in the Eucharist, what began for you in baptism. Thus, the Samaritan, as he comes to Jesus to give Him thanks is symbolic of the whole Church, coming out of the tragedy of sin, being freed from that horror, and coming in with a grateful heart to the Eucharistic table and crying out to Jesus, through this ritual, "Thank you my Lord and my God for healing me from my sin!" This is what this Gospel is about; this is what this story is proclaiming. It has everything to do with baptism and what we continue to celebrate as a Catholic community in the Liturgy of the Mass. Eucharist, thanksgiving, we give thanks from beginning to end of what God began in us in baptism, what He continues to give us in this Eucharistic sacrifice, and what He will empower us to do when we leave here. All of this is initiated through the saving waters of baptism.

But sometimes, like the nine lepers who do not return to give thanks to God, we forget where it all began for us. Thus, some people see baptism as what? A social event; they bring their children to be baptized and we never see them again at Mass; it is a social moment, it is something we do. They're like the nine lepers who came to be healed, and were healed, and did not return to God to give Him thanks. Only the one and the one who came was what? A foreigner, meaning he was a Samaritan, hated by the Jews. He was so disconnected from everyone; symbolic of what sin does to us, does it not? Sin disconnects us from God and from the community; it's a horrible state of being. It's a state of despondency and despair. The Samaritan recognized what God had done for him; he recognized that everything began, that everything changed for him at that moment. This is what we're called to believe and to experience and to hold on to as we look at our baptism, we recognize "Everything happened for me in baptism, I am not the same. Jesus has freed me from this horror that we call sin, in which I have been disconnected from my God and from the community of the faithful and now I come into this Eucharistic celebration every Sunday to give thanks over and over and over again." My brothers and sisters we are to be the Samaritan, hopefully, who comes back continuously to God, recognizing where it all began for us, recognizing what God has given us and gives us now and what God will give us in the future. Thus we cry out to God, "Jesus, Master, we give you thanks for what you gave us in the saving waters of baptism!"