

28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)  
(2 Kings 5:14-17 / Luke 17:11-19)  
12.10.2025

Dear brothers and sisters,

In both readings heard this morning, it is question of lepers being cured: Naaman is cured of his leprosy by God through the ministry of the prophet Elisha; and, in the gospel, ten lepers are cured by Jesus.

These two miracle stories tell us a lot about the compassionate love of God the Father and of his Son Jesus for humanity many years ago. But the Word of God is Good News for us today. How can these two healing miracles concern us here and now? How are they Good News for us today?

It is true that European nations are no longer really menaced by leprosy. But let us not forget that leprosy still affects people in 120 countries worldwide today. At the time of Jesus, those who had leprosy suffered not only physically, but also from social and religious marginalization to avoid the spreading of the sickness. And this is still true today for a lot of our contemporaries.

In biblical times, the word leprosy could also be used to describe a range of skin diseases, which still exist today. Who among us, one day or another, has not felt uncomfortable at the sight of a brother or sister suffering from a skin disease?

If leprosy seems far from us here in Europe, other sicknesses have taken its place. Each one of us could give a name to a serious sickness concerning them. Let us not forget Covid 19 which did not spare most of us.

Leprosy could also stand as a kind of metaphor for sin. Sin is something that separates us from God; sin, like leprosy, hinders us from being in relationship with others; sin separates us from our true self. We are all concerned by sin.

Naaman undertook a long journey from Aram to Samaria in order to be cured by the prophet Elisha. The ten lepers came to meet Jesus. They stood some way off and called to him: “Jesus! Master! Take pity on us”. The lepers asked Jesus for mercy, because they had nobody else to whom they could appeal for help.

We are not lepers, but we are sinners. We cannot deliver ourselves from our sins. God alone can show us mercy and forgive our sins.

We are sinners. Are we aware that our sins separate us from God, from others and from our true self? Do we suffer from our condition as sinners? Do we want to be set free from our sins? Do we call out to Jesus: Master! Take pity on me; forgive me; set me free. Do we call upon Jesus with conviction, or do we procrastinate? In fact, do we not live with our sins without being worried about them? Do we not forget them?

We believe that God can forgive our sins by grace, a grace forever offered to us. Jesus suffered his passion, died on the Cross and rose from the dead to reconcile us with the Father, to set us free from our sins, to forgive our sins, to heal us. If we are not lepers; we are sinners, but sinners forgiven, if only we take the decision to ask for forgiveness. Like the ten lepers of today’s gospel passage, let us call to Jesus: “Jesus! Master! Take pity on us sinners”.

It is also interesting to note that, in both readings heard this morning, some lepers thanked God for their healing, while others did not. Naaman came to thank the prophet Elisha. Only one of the

ten cured lepers came to thank Jesus. Jesus noticed this and drew attention to it: “Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they?”

Gratitude should be a constitutive dimension of our lives. Some of us take everything for granted, as if all was owed to them; while others welcome everything as a gift, as a grace. When we were a child and something was given to us by someone, our parents used to look at us and asked us: what do you say? We will have answered: “Thank you”. Do we still retain the lesson? Do we remember to say thanks?

Pope Francis used to say again and again that the word “Thank you” should always be on our lips. When we say “Thank you” the world is changed for the better. The great sacrament which makes the Church is called the Eucharist. The Greek word behind the word “Eucharist” means precisely “Thanksgiving”. To celebrate the Eucharist is to give thanks to God; it is to say “Thank you” to the Lord for all the blessings we have received from him, beginning by the gift of life.

We have to be grateful for all the persons in our lives who have gazed on us with pure and loving eyes, gratuitously: educators, catechists, friends, persons who carried out their roles above and beyond what was required of them. We have to be grateful for all those who manifest their good attention towards us in our daily lives, very often in very small ways, by things that we could easily miss. We have to be grateful to them and we have to be grateful to God who manifests his love to us through them.

A third and last remark is that only one among the ten who were cured by Jesus from their leprosy came to thank Him and praise God for the grace received. More than that, this man was a not a Jew like Jesus and the nine others, but a Samaritan, a foreigner, a sort of “heretic” for the Jews of that period in time. As Samaritan, this man was excluded from Jewish society and disdained by Jews. It was an outsider who returned to praise God and thanked Jesus for his cure.

This Samaritan was cured of his disease, he could be part of the social network of the community again and he was given to experience God at work in his life. This Samaritan recognized what had happened; he appreciated it; and he expressed his gratitude for it. It was this response, this faith that won the praise of Jesus: “Stand up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you”.

When Jesus commended this man for his response, he was provocative. He was presenting a foreigner to the Jews as an example to follow. Jesus’ listeners were being invited to re-evaluate their ways of dealing with others who were different from them. They had to re-evaluate how they understood God’s action unfolding before them.

This is also an invitation for us to be careful about the way we look at others; an invitation not to be negatively influenced by gender, skin-colour, social milieu, or the country of origin of the one to whom we speak, or the one we look at. Racism and discrimination of any kind have nothing to do with the gospel way.

During this year of hope, let us not forget that every kind of gratitude, however small it may be, gives rise to hope. We know only too well that we all need such hope today.