



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C

Fr. David Rosenberg
Institute for Spiritual Direction
visit us at <http://www.ISDministries.org/>

"Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" Luke 17:18

The account of the cure of the ten lepers is unique to Luke. This section follows immediately after our Gospel last Sunday, *The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"* Today's reading highlights the importance of gratitude to God for the miracle of new life.

Let's compare and contrast the reaction of the nine lepers to the one leper. The nine were from a well-ordered Jewish community, while the one was a poor Samaritan, an outcast without family or community. The nine had much to lose when they were struck down with leprosy. The one had nothing to lose. But imagine, if you were the nine, how you would have obsessed over being cast out of your comfortable life. Such an obsession would be your daily cross. To be cured would have been an answer to your daily prayer, the unreachable dream caused by incurable leprosy. Then all nine are cured when they followed Jesus' directive, *"Go and show yourselves to the priests."* Amazingly, the village priests let them back into their old life. They were given a second chance. But the thought of rising to a higher spiritual order was lost on them. All they could think of was the impossible dream coming true. It's little wonder they didn't give the one that cured them a second thought.

But the Samaritan, who had nothing to lose, was, because of his disease, living in a community with like-minded incurable others. He had no home to go back to. His cure became an opportunity not only for a cure, but a spiritual healing, as well. *"He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him."* The wisdom folk often refer to *"The feet of Jesus"* as the *School of Jesus*. A place to gain knowledge through Sacred Scriptures, to grow in understanding through illumination and follow Jesus along the Pilgrim's Way of the Cross to wisdom, fortitude, piety and wonder and awe.

The vagary of the fear that besets humans is pointed out dramatically by Jesus. A friend without spiritual illumination might easily be tempted to walk away from someone with chronic illness and disease. The opposite is true, as well. Misery and rejection by society can break down the cultural walls between the lives of the infirm as they are forced to live together in community. Jesus' words to the grateful leper highlights a common theme in Luke, that God's gift of salvation is offered to people of all nations.

Reflect on these two questions. What is more important: community approval or praise of God and gratitude to Jesus? Settling back into your old comfortable ways after a crisis, or sitting at the School of Jesus and being gifted with a whole new life? Second chances in life often lead to life changing decisions. Choosing the New Way, the Pilgrim's Way, ignites our faith where it is forged within us. The Pilgrim's Way will lead to a life well lived in God's graciousness. As we travel the Pilgrim's Way of the Cross not only do we experience a cure, but a holy and holistic healing. The gift of intentional gratitude is acknowledging that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

On the way to Jerusalem
Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee.
As he entered a village,
ten lepers approached him.
Keeping their distance,
they called out, saying,
"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

When Jesus saw them, he said to them,
"Go and show yourselves to the priests."

And as they went, they were made clean.
Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed,
turned back, praising God with a loud voice.
He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him.
And he was a Samaritan.

Then Jesus asked,
*"Were not ten made clean?
But the other nine, where are they?
Was none of them found to return
and give praise to God except this foreigner?"*

Then Jesus said to Samaritan,
*"Get up and go on your way;
your faith has made you well."*

The Gospel of the Lord