Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 17:11-19): As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they were going they were cleansed.

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. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" Then he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."

"Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!"

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
(Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona, Spain)

Today we can see once again how our attitude of faith can move the heart of Jesus. Think of the lepers in the Gospel—despite the social rejection they suffered, with a good measure of boldness, they drew near to Jesus and, we might even say, “compelled” Him with their trusting plea: "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" (Lk 17:13).

The response was immediate and powerful: “Go show yourselves to the priests” (Lk 17:14). And the Lord, showing His authority, worked a miracle: “as they were going, they were cleansed” (Lk 17:14).

This teaches us that the measure of Christ’s miracles is, in fact, the measure of our faith and trust in God. What else can we—frail creatures—do before God but trust Him? But it must be an active faith, one that moves us to obey His commands. A minimum of common sense will suffice to understand that: “Nothing is too difficult to believe about the One for whom nothing is too difficult to do.” (Saint J. H. Newman) If we do not see more miracles, it is because we “compel” the Lord so little with our lack of confidence and obedience to His will. As St. John Chrysostom said, “little faith can achieve a lot.”

And as the crowning fruit of faith, there comes joy overflowing into thanksgiving. Indeed, “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” (Lk 17:15–16).

But how sad! Out of ten who received this great miracle, only one came back. How ungrateful we can be when we so easily forget that everything comes from God and that everything belongs to Him. Let us resolve, then, to “compel” Him with our trusting faith and to show ourselves always grateful before His merciful love.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Let us follow after Christ and pray to the Father together with him. Let us not emulate Judas by departing from Christ, after partaking of his favors and dining excellently with him.” (Saint Thomas More)

- “Our God is a God who is approaching us. A God who is close. A God who started walking with His people and then became one of them, in Jesus Christ, to become close. With that closeness that gave encouragement to those ten lepers to ask Him to clean them up... No one wanted to miss that closeness.”

- “Every joy and suffering, every event and need can become the matter for thanksgiving which, sharing in that of Christ, should fill one's whole life: "Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thess 5:18)” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2648)