Wednesday of the Thirty-second Week in Ordinary Time

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 voice, 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.”

“He fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him”

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Today Jesus passes near us to help us live the scene we just heard, in a very real way, through the many marginalized people in our society—those who look to Christians in hopes of finding in them the goodness and love of Jesus. In the Lord’s time, lepers belonged to the class of outcasts. In fact, those ten lepers met Jesus at the entrance of a village (cf. Lk 17:12), since they were forbidden to enter towns or approach people—they “stood at a distance from him.”

With a bit of imagination, each of us can picture the marginalized of today’s world, who have names and surnames just like us: immigrants, drug addicts, prisoners, AIDS patients, the unemployed, the poor… Jesus wants to restore them, to relieve their suffering, to solve their problems. And He asks for our collaboration—selfless, generous, and effective—motivated only by love.

At the same time, we must take to heart the lesson Jesus gives us. We are sinners in need of forgiveness; we are poor, expecting everything from Him. Could we say, like the leper, “Jesus, Master! Have pity on me!” (cf. Lk 17:13)? Do we know how to turn to Jesus in deep and trusting prayer?

Do we imitate the healed leper who returned to give thanks? In fact, only “one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud Voice” (Lk 17:15). Jesus noticed the absence of the others:

“Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine?” (Lk 17:17). Saint Augustine left us this thought: “‘Thanks be unto God!’ No other phrase is more easily spoken… and profitable in practice, than this.”

So then, how do we thank Jesus for the great gift of life—our own and that of our families—for the grace of faith, for the holy Eucharist, for the forgiveness of our sins? Doesn’t it sometimes happen that we fail to give thanks for the Eucharist, even though we participate in it frequently? The Eucharist is—without a doubt—our greatest daily gift.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “How shall we repay the Lord for all his goodness to us? God is so good that he asks no recompense except our love.” (Saint Basil the Great).

- “Man needs to honor his Creator by offering to him, in an act of thanksgiving and praise, all that he has received. Man must never lose sight of his debt, which he alone is capable of acknowledging and paying back as the one creature made in God's own image and likeness.” (Saint John Paul II)

- “Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honored with the worship of adoration. To visit the Blessed Sacrament is a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 1,418)