

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 by close to us so that we can actually relive the above mentioned passage in the shape of so many people relegated to an outer edge by our society, and who look at us Christians as their only possibility to find Jesus' love and goodness. In the days of the Lord, lepers were totally marginalized. In fact, those ten lepers met Jesus “as he was entering a village” (Lk 17:12), as they were not allowed in the villages, nor could they get any close to people (“They stood at a distance from him and raised their voice”).

With some imagination, each one of us can reproduce the image of those outcasts in our own society, who also have names and surnames, like we do: immigrants, drug addicts, wrongdoers, AIDS victims, unemployed, destitute... Jesus wants to heal

them, to remedy their suffering, to solve their problems; and He expects our unselfish, free, efficient collaboration... for love.

We can also assume Jesus' lesson for us. For we are sinners and in need of forgiveness, we are beggars who depend totally on him. Would we be able to say like the leper "Jesus, Master! Have pity on me!" (cf. Lk 17:13)? Do we know how to turn to Jesus with a profound and confident prayer?

Do we imitate the cleansed leper that goes back to Jesus thanking him out loud? In fact, only "And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud Voice" (Lk 17:15). Jesus finds the other nine missing: "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? (Lk 17:17). St. Augustine gave the following sentence: "'Thanks God!': nothing shorter can be said (...) or made more efficiently than with these words." Accordingly, how do we thank God for the great gift of our life, and that of our family; for the grace of the faith, the Holy Eucharist, the forgiveness of sins...? Is it not true that quite often we do not thank him for the Eucharist, even though we may be frequently participating of it? The Eucharist is, no doubt, our best daily experience.

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, n° 1,418)