

28th Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle C

Let us pray:

Lord, we come into your presence with gratitude.
Open our hearts and minds so that we may dwell in your Spirit.
We like lepers also have scars and wounds.
Have pity on us, Lord.
Touch us and make us whole.

The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.

Sing to the Lord a new song for God has done marvelous deeds.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation by our God.

Break into song; sing praise.

The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power. (Psalm 98)

The Gospel – Luke 17: 11-19

The leper was healed while ‘Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem.’ This is what happens to us when we walk with Jesus even to and through the difficult times and places of our lives. We are healed each time we come to Eucharist praising God and becoming more perfectly a part of Christ’s body. We are healed each time we put others ahead of ourselves. We are healed each time we choose to forgive those who wrong us even as we try to overcome the evil. We are healed each time we pause a few seconds to ‘give thanks to God’ for the many blessings of each day. Such gratitude makes our faith a vibrant and growing reality: we owe all to God who gives us everything that is good. Faithfulness and thankfulness go (grow?) together.

(Living Liturgy, Cycle C, p.224-227)

What is important about the fact that the Samaritan is cured
along with the other Jewish lepers?

Why do you think he returned?

Do you think he also realized that he would not be welcomed
in the temple, even though he was cured?

Why do you think the others did not return?

How can this challenge us to think about our faith and our church?

Note, too, that this Samaritan, though healed of disease, would probably still find harshness, rejection, and suffering. Jesus would find this also in Jerusalem. Faith does not keep us from all suffering, but it does empower us to live fully and gratefully despite it. *(This Sunday’s Scripture, Year C, Oct. 14, 2001)*

1st Reading -- 2 Kings 5: 14-17

Naaman the Syrian is cured of leprosy.

What do you make of this story? How does it ‘go with’ the gospel?

How does Naaman think about God’s presence?

How are we to think about God’s presence?

This story is good to read completely in 2 Kings 5.

Naaman had learned about Elisha and possibility of a cure for his leprosy from his wife’s slave girl whom he had captured during a raid in Israel.

What do you think about this little girl’s faith and kindness toward her enemy and master?

1st Reading -- 2 Timothy 2: 8 –13

Remember, this faithful follower of Paul who is writing this letter has probably saved for us many actual ‘quotes’ or sayings of Paul, some of which we find in this reading. He hoped that Paul’s faithfulness in the midst of hardship and ‘prison chains’ would inspire his fellow suffering brothers and sisters to remain steadfast during their trying times. (*Celebrations*, Oct. 1998)
What meaning do you get from this?

Paul also assures us that though he was ‘chained’ and eventually killed, “the Word of God is not chained” and that the God we find in Jesus Christ will be forever faithful – even when we are not.

Scripture, the Word that formed a people; a people that wrote the Word . . .

God continues to work and inspire even our stage of

reading and interpreting –

helping these words live for us –

enfleshing His love and presence in us.

**“The Bible is not a book to be read,
but a drama in which to participate.”** Abraham Heschel

“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3: 16

“Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” St Augustine

**“The Church venerates sacred Scriptures
and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist with the same vigor.**

A story about faith from John Kavanaugh, S.J., liturgy.slu.edu:

There was a religious sister who was a midwife. She taught in a university and she practiced her profession in a city hospital. Into the hospital walked a lost, young teenager, many months pregnant, not even aware of the fact, but sick.

“I’ve got news for you,” the midwife said. “You’re pregnant.” There was no boy or man who might claim the name of father, no family, no support group, no promise. As I recall, the young girl did not even know how or when she became pregnant, so meager was her knowledge of “reproductive rights.”

The sister-servant promised the young mother-to-be that she would be there for her. Each week a visit could be made and lessons taught: how to eat properly and take care of a pregnant body, how to prepare for delivery, how to live. And each week, visits were made. After the novena of months passed, birth came. One new mother’s child, with the midwife’s guidance, was fed rightly, nursed and cleaned, cared and worked for.

Then the young mother disappeared. She was gobbled up by this heartless world, lost in the maelstrom of this culture, the American dream, which for her and her child was a nightmare. She went defenseless before the pimps of pleasure and power. She vanished into the dangerous night.

She was not heard from again until, I think, six years later, when in her early twenties she wrote a note to her midwife-mother. It was an invitation, the message now blurred in my mind. “I am sorry I waited so long to thank you, but I wanted to surprise you. I wanted to be like you, since you were someone so good and loving.”

The invitation was to a graduation for Licensed Practical Nurses. Somehow, stronger than all the threat of violence and abuse, more appealing than any seduction of the moment, was the gift and promise of a person’s witness.

The good is like a frail fire. It expends itself once it is lit, bringing light to those around. Even though slight, it can illuminate a big dark room, helping you make it to the other side. Like love and wisdom, it lives in being communicated, being given.

How does this story ‘go with’ this week’s scriptures?

Prayer – our life-line, our faith-line . . .

From Ronald Rolheiser:

“Most of us find it difficult to pray. We say we are going to – but then we never quite ‘get around to it.’ We come home from a long day of activities and work and we find we are just too tired, too stressed, or too frazzled to even want to pray. *How can we pray when both our bodies and our hearts are chronically stressed and on over-load?* A definition of prayer says it is a *“lifting of mind and heart to God.”* We find this hard to do, because we often have the wrong notion of what that means. We unconsciously nurse the idea that we can only pray when we are not distracted, not bored, not angry, not emotionally preoccupied, not caught up in our many heartaches and headaches. We feel we can’t give the proper attention and respect that God wants. We often treat God like an authority finger, a critical parent, or a visiting dignitary. When we do pray we tell God what we think God wants to hear. We want to crank up the praise, reverence, and gratitude in stead of lifting up what is actually in our hearts and minds. *But* with faith in a God who loves us we can try to pray out of our real hearts and minds. Simply put: if we go to pray and we are bored, pray the boredom. If we are feeling angry, pray the anger. If you feel full of fervor and gratitude, pray the fervor. Every thought or feeling is a valid entry into prayer. For examples of such human prayer, look through the psalms and you will find everything from praise to murderous threats! What is so unfortunate is that, most often, because we misunderstand prayer, *we stay away from it when we most need it . . .*

No matter the headache or the heartache, we only need to lift it up to God.

http://liturgy.dlu.edu/28OrdC101010/reflections_rolheiser.html)

Let try to pray this way this week!

Let us pray:

Lord, the path of your Good News

is not always through a rose garden.

Or, maybe it is.

We just need to notice the roses

along with the thorns that sometime plague us.

Give us hearts and minds

**that will be able to offer the sweetness and the toughness of your love
to our neighbors, our friends –**

our families and even strangers.

We are so grateful for your healing touch in our lives.

Amen.