

LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL

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**TWENTY EIGHTH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME**

12th October 2025

Luke 17:11 On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. **12** As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, **13** they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” **14** When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were made clean. **15** Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. **16** He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. **17** Then Jesus asked, “Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? **18** Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” **19** Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”

This Sunday’s reading, though seemingly straightforward, is in fact a combination of two separate stories:

- Jesus heals ten lepers (verses 11 to 14);
- the grateful Samaritan earns Jesus’ praise and an additional healing (verses 15 to 19).

The lepers

Leprosy in the gospels is symbolic of the situation from which God willed to rescue his people. It is so in two ways:

- it disfigured people;
- those suffering from it were considered unclean and kept away from the community.

Jesus’ response to lepers invites us to celebrate those who act like him, towards us or others. It also calls us to repentance as individuals and as Church communities – this is the role we should be playing in our communities and in society.

In your meditation remember “lepers” in your family, neighbourhood, classroom, workplace, society – people who are looked down on because they are disfigured in some way, or considered unclean.

The lepers in the gospel story cry out, “Jesus! Master! Take pity on us.” The lepers of our experience also cry out, but they often do so in different ways:

- a) They behave badly
- b) Often they are silently uncooperative and surly, engaging in what psychologists call “passive aggression”.

The text says that Jesus “saw” the lepers. The expression is significant; it says that whereas others simply passed by, he took note of their condition. Nowadays this would include interpreting the behaviour patterns mentioned above.

It is significant too that Jesus met the lepers “as he travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee.” It is only if we take the risk of “traveling along the borders” of our communities that we will meet the lepers of our time.

Today many “lepers” are rejected by their church communities or religious groups; they internalize this rejection and end up having guilt feelings about themselves. Jesus people give them the assurance that they have the right to “show themselves” to the “priests” of their culture; these include all those who dictate religious attitudes – parents, teachers, parish lay leaders, the “holy people” of the community.

The grateful Samaritan

If we focus on the Samaritan we can interpret the story as a meditation (starting with our own experience as always) on gratitude as a wonderful gift. People who know how to give thanks are well equipped to face the disappointments of life, they can “stand up and go their way” with enthusiasm and energy. On the contrary, those who do not give thanks – “complainers” – are forever disappointed by life and lack the energy to move forward.

gratitude is a rare gift. This is particularly true of our modern Western culture; we are so surrounded by creature comforts that we take God’s blessings for granted and do not “come back to give praise to him.”

This holds for natural things like water, sunlight, clouds, mountains and rivers; for family, friends, neighbours and fellow workers; for good health, and for healthcare.

MICHEL DE VERTEUIL - Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels, Year C

HEALING

Each of us has a personal history of trials from sickness, sufferings and hardships. Within each history, healing is a privileged event for giving praise and glory to God. As St. Irenaeus us said: *“The glory of God is the human person fully alive.”*

There are very few experiences as radical and basic as healing, for in healing we experience victory over evil, the triumph of life over the danger of death. When we recover we are offered the possibility of accepting God in a new way. He comes to us as the ground of our being and as the source of new life.

Modern medicine allows people to undergo the process of healing more frequently than in times past, and we should thank those who heal us. Healing can also be an occasion for and a stimulus to a new relationship with God. We can change from indifference to faith, from rejection to acceptance, from doubt to trust, from fear to love.

This healthy acceptance of God can heal us from fears, emptiness, and wounds that harm us. It can create the foundation for a life of greater health and freedom. It can heal us totally.

JOSÉ A PAGOLA - Following in the Footsteps of Jesus, Year C

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The cure of the lepers is not just a physical cure, it was also brought the people healed back from exclusion into the community. Perhaps you have experienced the movement from exclusion to inclusion. What was it like for you to be accepted once again when you had felt excluded?
2. Who were the Jesus people for you who brought about this change? For whom have been able to do this, perhaps by healing a rift with a friend, or by listening to the opinion of someone you had dismissed out of hand, or by opening the door in some other way to another?
3. Some people work hard at breaking down barriers in society, seeking inclusion for those who find themselves labelled as lepers by society or by a section of society. Where have you seen this happening? Who has been doing this kind of work? Where is the good news in such action?
4. When we do good for another we may not do it for the thanks we hope to get, but it can hurt when no gratitude is shown. How have you experienced the positive effects of thanks given and received?

JOHN BYRNE OSA - Intercom

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life, It turns what we have into enough and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.” (Melody Beattie)

Gratitude is an important part of faith. Make a list of all the blessings you are grateful for in your life. Write a letter to someone expressing gratitude for all they mean to you

Take a few moments to remember all those who care for the sick, whether at home or in healthcare settings. Give thanks for all they do, and ask God to bless them in their work.

TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT - Go Deeper

A note on leprosy

The word leprosy is conventionally used to translate a Hebrew expression sara‘at, which almost certainly is not the same as Hansen’s disease. Instead, sara‘at encompassed a variety of conditions which share the feature of discolouration of surfaces, including human skin and the walls of house (Leviticus 14:34-57). People with sara‘at were regarded as ritually impure, a condition which rendered those in contact with them also ritually impure.

A note on Samaritans

The Samaritans were a Hebrew sect, with their own centre of worship on Mount Gerizim. They continue to exist today, claiming to be descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh among the tribes of the Northern kingdom. In some ways, they are old-fashioned Israelites, following YHWH and limiting the Bible to the Pentateuch alone. Not having undergone the Exile and the radical restructuring of Judaism that took place in the Exile, the differences between Jews and Samaritans became more pronounced. As a result there was considerable propaganda against the Samaritans, claiming they were really foreigners who brought with them their own false worship.

Thought for the day

Inclusivity and inclusion are buzz words in our culture. We find the radical openness of Jesus very helpful today, as we try to see the future of the Christian project. St Paul himself has been called the “founder of universalism” (Alain Badiou). Two comments may help us reflect. Firstly, not everyone is guided by this vision—the evidence for “exclusivism” is all around us. Secondly, in the Christian vision, respect for all is grounded not only in creation (“image and likeness of God” but also in salvation (“God wants all people to be saved”). Both dimensions are important for Jesus, for Paul and for us today.

KIERAN O’MAHONY OSA - tarsus.ie

In today’s gospel we see Jesus performing an act of healing. As with all Jesus’ miracles this was not performed simply to show that he had the power but to allow the sick back into their community. In this case a group of lepers who are excluded because of their illness can only stand far off and call to Jesus to heal them. This he readily does but the point made in the story is not that Jesus could do this but that people could still be so ungrateful. Blessed as we are in so many ways, it is easy to take things for granted. The Samaritan in the gospel is there to remind us that learning to say thanks is a simple way to nourish our relationship with God.

SEAN GOAN - Let the Reader Understand, Year C