

XIV Trinity 2020  
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish  
Father Craig Looney  
*Galatians 5.16-24 St. Luke 17.11-19*



Ten men ask Jesus to heal them of a skin condition. “Please make us well again”, they ask. They keep their distance. Jesus tells them to go see the priest. On their way they are healed. Only one man returns to thank God for healing him. He was a Samaritan! Where were the other nine men?

We don’t know for certain what skin condition afflicted the ten men. It may very well have been Hansen’s disease. Any severe skin condition was suspect...it might be contagious. The men would have been living away from their family, friends and community.

Unlike the deaf-mute Jesus healed by touching him, he doesn’t lay hands on the ten men. He tells them to do what the Book of Leviticus instructs them to do...go see the priest...only he could certify they were free of their skin condition.

Like the hero in last week’s Parable of the Good Samaritan...the man who did the right thing in today’s Gospel is also a Samaritan. The difference...Jesus had a real-time encounter with the ten men...he wasn’t telling a story. Jesus encounters the ten men along the border between Samaria and Galilee. Although the Gospel doesn’t expressly say the other nine men were Jews...they probably were.

We spend a lot of time asking God for help or guidance...at work...at home...at school...at church. We also ask him for healing...for ourselves and for others. Our prayers for help or guidance are not magic incantations to get God’s attention. We already have his attention. Our individual and corporate prayers are acts of faith. They are expressions of our belief God hears and answers our prayers...and God always answers our prayers: yes...no...or wait awhile.

Now that God has answered our prayers and we have seen the results of our asking for help or guidance...what do we do next? We need to do exactly what the Samaritan does in today’s Gospel. The Samaritan did the right thing...he came back to Jesus and fell at his

feet and thanked God...he knew it was God who healed him.

Jesus first wants us to show the same kind of faith the Samaritan shows...he wants us to believe he can and will help us every day of our lives. He wants us to put our trust in him and to know God is a loving Father who wants what’s best for us. And he wants us to thank God...in the same way we thank our parents or children or friends who help us.

What about the other nine men? Jesus asked where were they...why didn’t they too come back to thank God for healing them? They didn’t do the right thing. The Gospel doesn’t tell us what happened to the other nine men. We can guess they lived life to the fullest, which is what God wants for all of us. We can also sense how disappointed Jesus was when they failed to give God the credit for healing them.

Jesus wants us to know God is always ready to forgive us and heal us because it’s his nature to show mercy and compassion. Jesus shows us how much the Father loves us through his own acts of love and compassion...especially through his acts of healing. He cares about our physical and spiritual health and everything we do in our daily lives whether it’s work, school, church, or vacation time to get refreshed. And nothing is unimportant to God.

Ten men with a terrible skin condition came to Jesus for help. They were at their wits end. They were all healed. Only one man came back to thank Jesus for curing him. Today we have treatments available for people who have Hansen’s disease and other skin conditions. Those treatments are no less miraculous healings than Jesus telling ten men to go see the priest and have him certify they were healed.

The current pandemic is on everyone’s mind. This is not the first time the Church and the World has faced a health crisis. We should continue to ask God to inspire the medical professionals who are looking for a vaccine and pray for an end to the pandemic.

And let’s remember to thank God for the miracles we experience every day of our lives.

God likes it when we say “thank you!”

