

XIV Trinity 2021
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish
Father Craig Looney
Galatians 5.16-24 St. Luke 17.11-19



Jewish Law required anyone with a rash or skin disorder to go see a priest. The priest would determine if it was a contagious disease. If it was, that person was barred from associating with family, friends and community. They lived as outcasts possibly... for the rest of their lives.

The ten men in today's Gospel had a visible skin condition the priest had declared contagious. We can't be certain exactly what their skin condition was. We do know they were living a life of total and complete isolation.

The ten men approached Jesus. They kept their distance. They shouted, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" Jesus doesn't engage them in conversation. He simply tells them to go see the priest and let him examine them. The Gospel tells us on the way they were healed. Only one returned to give thanks to God. He fell at Jesus' feet. He knew Jesus was the source of healing. And he was a Samaritan.

Jesus expresses disappointment the other nine hadn't returned to give thanks to God for healing them. He didn't take back the healing of the other nine. He tells the Samaritan his faith has made him well. He received physical and spiritual healing. Jesus makes it clear God likes it when we thank him for all he does in our lives.

Last year at this time most of us were in forced isolation. We were told to keep our distance from each other...even from our closest friends and family. Weekly grocery shopping became a voyage into uncharted territory. We can certainly understand how the men in today's Gospel felt being isolated from their family, friends and community.

We spent a lot of time over this past year asking God to help the medical professionals develop a vaccine for Covid-19. God answered our prayers...vaccines are now available. We also ask him for healing in a general sense for those who are in "trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity". And we ask him for healing during the Intentions at Mass for our family and friends.

Sometimes we take God for granted. We expect him to hear our prayers...and he does. We ask him for healing...and he heals. What we often forget is to thank him...not just for miraculous healings...but for everything he does in our lives. 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.

The Gospel doesn't tell us what happened to the ten men who were healed of a "dreaded skin disease". We can assume they went home to live with their families and spend time with their friends. They would have been welcomed back into their community. We wonder if the nine who didn't come back to thank Jesus ever gave God 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 and especially through his acts of healing. He cares about our physical and spiritual health...together they make us whole.

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. What about the other nine...where were they? Where are we in the story?

Today we have treatments available for people who have various skin conditions. Those treatments are no less miraculous healings than Jesus telling ten men to go see the priest and have him certify they are free of any contagious disease

The current pandemic is still on everyone's mind. We can all agree we are in a better place now than we were at this time last year. We have a long way to go yet...but our faith keeps us strong and focused. We should continue to ask God to inspire the medical professionals to discover even better ways of fighting the pandemic.

And let's not forget to thank him for what he has done for us. .

