



## He who believes in God gives thanks again and...

Homily, 13 October 2019 – Nelson Barbieri SDS  
[translation]

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)  
[2 Kgs 5, 14-17; Ps 97, 1. 2-3ab. 3cd-4; 2 Tm 2, 8-13; Lk 17, 11-19]

Every day we find people in the church who ask for grace to be cured of some disease, for themselves or for someone close to them. It happens every day, all over the world. Who among us, before an illness or with someone sick at home, has not approached God and prayed for the grace of being healed? I mention this to say a very simple thing: to seek divine protection at the time of pain and disease is characteristic of human nature. It is extremely human to pray for health and healing of a disease. In the first reading, Naaman addressed healing and in the Gospel, ten lepers begged Jesus to heal them.

Today's Gospel presents faith as an attitude, through a walk back, in the example of the leper who returns to Jesus. Those who live the faith understand that the source of life lies in Jesus, so, like the leper, he changes direction and returns to Jesus to give thanks.

The Catholic Church has always recognized miracles. All beatifications and canonizations are performed only because a miracle has occurred, through the intercession of those who are beatified or canonized. The recognition of a miracle by the Church is extremely rigid through extensive and deep scientific research in the field of medicine. We Salvatorians witness that, with the miracle of Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan. In the process of recognition of a miracle by the Church, healing is usually carried out in the silence of suffering, in beds of pain, in deep and silent prayers, where faith is testified through silence and trust of those who believe deeply in God. And that has a reason to be like that. In the first reading, we hear that God used a very simple way to heal Naaman. The healing took place taking bath in a river. The same thing is repeated in the Gospel: healing occurs on a walk. Healing occurs almost always in the simplicity of those who are willing to obey the Word of God.

We also have to pray for healing, it is a biblical fact. The Bible, especially the Gospel, is full of people who pray to get healed. Cures of physical illnesses, but also sentimental cures, anger, hate, evils that take away inner peace. Asking for healing is a testimony of faith. Only those who believe in God and his power pray for divine healing for themselves or for those who need it. But it should be understood that healing can occur through the patience of a treatment, it can happen through a medication, the acceptance of the disease, or through a direct intervention of divine action. In any case, from the 10 lepers we learn three important things in his plea to heal: first the need to pray, beg for healing; the second is obedience to the Word of Jesus, when He asks us to do something in the search for healing, and the third, the importance of thanksgiving.

All thanks come from an experience of admiration. When you admire what someone has done for you, a thanksgiving full of joy is born spontaneously. In the readings we have just heard there are two admirations: human admiration and divine admiration. There is a human admiration that holds on at the miracle, like those nine healed lepers who did not return. But there is also human admiration that leads to thanksgiving, which has the ability to thank again. This is the case of Naaman in the first reading and the case of the Samaritan who, cured of leprosy, returns to thank Jesus.

The other admiration present in the readings is the divine one, manifested in the person of Jesus in two ways. The most obvious is that Jesus marvels about the fact that only one acknowledged that he needed to thank. It is significant that most people do not thank God for what they receive from Him. It is an obvious fact today. We mostly hear that "what I have is the result of my effort", "the result of my struggle", "my work" and perhaps for this, if I do everything, I don't need God and I don't need to thank him. The more you exalt yourself, the more you get God out of life, and you have little to thank for. Jesus' other admiration is for the Samaritan who was healed and who returned. He returned because faith in Jesus woke up in him: he approaches and prostrates. It is a gesture that recognizes the divine presence in the person of Jesus. It is so much, that Jesus no longer sends him to the priest, but to a new way of life, saying: "Go, because your faith has saved you."

Therefore, thanksgiving to God is a manifestation of personal faith. When we believe that we are who we are because God offers us His grace and accompanies us with His presence and His Spirit, it is logical to return to thank him. Therefore, we can assess the dimension of our faith by the way we turn to God to thank, just like that leper, who understood that his healing, which offered him a new life, had a source and this source could only be God. So, if you recognize that everything comes from God, you have faith. The success of your work, your studies, your family life has its origin in God, and naturally makes you feel grateful. Daily thanking and giving thanks in a Eucharist, that is, thanking God, as we are doing now. He who believes in God gives thanks again and again and in giving thanks we profess our faith.

