

## **Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time “C” Cycle October 8-9, 2016**

**When children learn to speak, and delight their parents with their attempts to say “mama” and “dada,” they begin to teach them to say the magic words “please” and “thank you.” Parents teach their children these words to help them to develop into good, unselfish, caring, and generous persons. Thankfulness or gratitude is one of the themes promoted in today’s holy Word of God, found in the Old Testament reading and in the Gospel.**

**There is a story about a group of grandmother talking about their grandchildren and how grateful some of them were and some were not. One of the grandmothers said that over Christmas every one of her nine grandchildren came to visit to thank her for the monetary gifts she had sent them. Amazed, the other asked how this could be! She answered “I purposely did not sign their checks!”**

**In the Old Testament reading, from the Second Book of Kings, we hear the story of the non-Jewish Gentile Syrian military officer Naaman, who was afflicted with the dreaded disease of leprosy. On the advice of his Israelite slave girl, he goes to seek out the prophet Elisha in hopes of a cure.**

**Although Naaman at first resists the prophet’s simple advice to bathe in the Jordan river, his assistants persuade him. When he gives in and does plunge seven times into the waters, he is cured. Overwhelmed with gratitude, Naaman returns to the prophet Elisha and wants to reward him. When Elisha refuses to accept his gift, Naaman asks if he might take some Israelite soil back to his home country on which he will offer grateful worship to the true God of Israel.**

**The Gospel, from St. Luke, tells about ten lepers approaching Jesus from a distance begging him probably for alms. What Jesus gives them is more valuable, cleansing from their dreaded leprosy, which literally ate away the flesh of its victims. After being cleared by the Jewish priests to be able to return to living a normal life in the community, only one of the ten returns to express gratitude to Jesus. This grateful one is a foreigner, an outsider, considered by Jews as a member of a despised group, a Samaritan.**

**Applying this to ourselves, we realize that none of our lives is perfect, but all of us have reason to be grateful. It is physically, emotionally, and especially spiritually healthy to reflect daily on our blessings. Compared to many regions of the world, which are war torn or the people live in abject poverty, we are blessed materially. We are grateful.**

**Spiritually we have the gift of our Catholic faith, which energizes us to live good and wholesome lives, which gives us meaning and purpose and offers us the hope of an eternal life of happiness with our loving and generous God. We are grateful.**

**At times, we may slip away from God's ways and commit sin. He cleanses us from the leprosy of sin especially through our prayers of contrition and through the sacrament of Reconciliation. We are grateful.**

**The Eucharist we celebrate literally means to give thanks to God for all his blessings to us. Every time we come to Mass, may we remember that it is to praise God, to seek his blessings, and to express our heartfelt gratitude.**