

### The Emotional Samaritan

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Imagine a colony of ten lepers making their way to the big city Jerusalem to present themselves to the priest. For years they had been living together in the uninhabited countryside because lepers were forbidden to interact with society. In fact, if ever they came near human habitation they were expected to ring a bell to alert the people and to cry, "Unclean! Unclean!" As far as the society was concerned they were already dead, since leprosy was practically incurable. Today these ten are making the long journey to the city of Jerusalem because earlier on in the day they had cried to a man of God, Jesus, to heal them and Jesus had asked them to go and show themselves to the priest.

Priests in old Jewish society were not only ministers of religion, they were also ministers of sanitation. People who had skin diseases presented themselves to the priest who would examine them and pronounce whether the disease was leprosy or not. If the priest judges that the disease is leprosy, the patient is banished with immediate effect from family, friends and society and is condemned to live in lonely caves in the mountainside or in burial places till they drop dead. Sometimes, however, the skin disease healed or got better and before the patient could return to their families they must first show themselves again to the priest who would certify their healing and perform a rite of cleansing over them. When Jesus told the ten lepers to go and present themselves to the priest they understood: Jesus has agreed to heal them and he now sends them to the priest who could certify them well again.

As they made their way to Jerusalem they felt in themselves a surge of new strength and vitality and realize that they and indeed been healed. They go wild with joy. Now what do they do? "hey, let's go back to Jesus," suggests one of them. "No," said another, "Jesus himself commanded us to go and show ourselves to the priest. We must obey what Jesus said. Don't be emotional. Remember, we are not free to meet people until the priest certifies us clean." but someone is not listening to his logic. One of them turns back, jumping and praising God as he goes, all the way back to Jesus.

The other nine take a look at him, shake their heads and continue their journey to the priest. "Let him go," they say. "He is crazy, this Samaritan. How does he dare disobey the explicit command of Jesus? Wait till Jesus sees him! Jesus might even withdraw his healing for failing to obey him."

But we know what happened when he got to Jesus. He threw himself at his feet and thanked him. **Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."** what a surprise? Why on earth did this foreigner get it right while his Jewish counterparts did not? A lot can be said here.

1. Obedience, law and logic have their place in the service of God but so also do spontaneity, intuition and emotion. The nine Jewish lepers were listening to their head. The Samaritan listened to his heart. It was Blaise Pascal who said that there is reason in the heart that reason itself does not know.
2. The nine Jewish lepers were bent on their own interest, their healing and integration into society . The Samaritan risked his future to go first and say thanks to Jesus to whom thanks is due. In the process he gained complete healing of body and soul. Do you remember Carey Landry's song "Lose yourself in me [in Jesus] and you will find yourself." That's it.

Eucharist is a Greek word meaning thanksgiving. The Samaritan leper performed a Eucharist. We are all gathered here today Sunday for the same reason, to perform a Eucharist. We can learn from our faith hero today that a Eucharist acceptable to the Lord is not a matter of head and reason alone but of the heart and the emotions as well.

## READINGS OF THE WEEK

2 Kings 5:14-17

2 Timothy 2:8-13

Luke 17:11-19

October 15,, 2013

# 靈 修 生 活

## 表 達 感 激

蔡 惠 民 神 父

有一個婦人，她辛苦地支撐著一個家，卻從未得到家人的任何感激。有一天晚上，她問她的先生：「老公，我在想，萬一我有一天死了，你會不會花一筆錢買花向我哀悼？」「當然會啊！老婆，妳幹嘛問這個？」「我只是在想，其實到那時候，兩萬元的鮮花對我已經一點意義也沒有了。但是我還活著的時候，有時候只要二十元的鮮花，對我更有意義。」

耶穌醫好了十個癩病人，只有一個撒瑪黎雅人回來向祂道謝，其餘九個為甚麼沒有回來？難道癩病痊癒為他們就像發熱退燒一樣平常嗎？我相信不是。只要比較一下昔日被隔離的寂寞孤單，與今日再次回到家庭社群的歡聚團圓；又或者比較一下昔日自己駭人的面孔，與今日如同嬰兒一樣的柔嫩肌膚，他們怎會不覺察病愈所帶來的轉變。事實上，他們不知多少次放聲大哭，希望有人能憐憫他們，醫治他們；他們也不知多少次哀禱，希望自己的命運能夠像納亞曼一樣得到改變。

九個癩病人沒有回來向耶穌道謝，因為在痊癒的一刻，他們的興奮很快又被其他掛慮掩蓋了。例如，我的家人還認得我嗎？司祭會歧視我嗎？我有能力重新工作嗎？……諸如此類的焦慮立刻取代了痊癒的喜樂，以致他們沒有靜下來的空間去感謝耶穌。一個朋友作全身例行檢查，醫生告訴他肝臟的底片有白點，很大可能是癌癥擴散的跡像。為了進一步確實，醫生建議他做磁力共振掃描，明天回來看報告。那一夜，朋友的心情如同一個等待宣判的死囚，輾轉不能成眠。第二天，知道結果一切正常後，朋友開心之餘，即時想起要趕快完成耽誤了的工作，完全忘記了健康並不是必然的。

人生充滿了夢想，但為甚麼夢想達到後，我們又不知恩惜恩？耶穌治好了十個癩病人，只有一個回來向祂道謝。為甚麼我們的人生，總是營營役役，連十分鐘靜下來的時間都沒有？只要我們數算一下那些曾令我們茶飯不思，但從未發生的焦慮，加上那些實現的夢想，生命中要感謝的，實在數之不盡。

生命的豐盛不在於多姿多采，而在於真實擁有。幾時我們不懂得珍惜和感謝，我們還未算擁有生命。我們以為擁有四肢五官，除非我們意識它們的運作並不是必然的，我們未算真正擁有。我們以為愛一個人，除非我們欣賞和體貼他的臨在，我們未算真正去愛。很多時，我們要等到失去的時候，才會珍惜昔日的擁有。

當人能夠發現生命的每一細小存在都並非必然，並懂得珍惜和感謝的時候，那便是耶穌所說的：「起來，去吧，你的信德救了你。」（路十六19）有一次，一個牧靈工作者探望一個全身機能慢慢退化的老人家，發現她除了頸部可以輕微轉動外，全身上下都不能動彈。她仍滿面笑容向探望她的人說：「我很高興仍然能抬頭看到你！」「如果你連頭都不能轉，你會怎樣？」「我仍會為聽到你的聲音而感恩！」「如果最後你連耳朵也聽不到，你會怎樣？」「我會因你來探我而高興！」她樂天惜恩的態度實在教牧靈工作者汗顏。

感恩不單使我們真實擁有生命，也是對生命的施予者說：「多謝！」對愛我們的人說：「我相信你愛我！」天主對我們白白施恩，最好的回應是知恩惜恩。當納亞曼發現自己被治愈後，他大聲宣告說：「現在我確實知道：全世界只在以色列有天主。」（列下五14）同樣，在那個回來跪在腳前的撒瑪黎雅人身上，耶穌看到一個真實的生命，一個珍惜自己為天主所愛的生命，一個光榮天主的生命。 摘自「公教報」

## 本 週 讀 經

二 零 一 三 年 十 月 十 三 日

列下 5:14-17；弟後 1:8-13；路 17:11-19