

Homily. 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.C. 12/13 October 2019.

We know that we're pretty well on the right track with our faith life when we can find reasons to be grateful to God. I'm saying this to you confidently because gratefulness is the heart of prayer, and prayer is the power-house of our faith, our energy source for living the Christ-life today.

Now, I know at least as well as you do that this can sometimes be hard to do due to the circumstances we're experiencing. Likewise, I know well that reasons for whinging, whining, complaining and fault finding always come easily. The fact of the matter, though, is that an ungrateful way of living achieves very little, rarely changing things for the better, neither for ourselves, nor for others. Negativity is a lot like salt and sugar; It tastes great for a while, but very quickly it heads to our hips and heart causing damage that can ricochet around us for decades to come.

Whether we like him or not, it's indisputable that Pope Francis is a happy and joyful man, and that his joy is attractive and contagious. It seems that the more some people dislike, hate, resist and abuse him, the more joyful he becomes. I think that this is because the Pope knows that when people oppose and denigrate him unfairly then he's on the right track, the track of the Good-News. Jesus word and work was resisted, too, by the forces of evil and those who were threatened by the liberation and empowering of others. St. Paul said the same he told young Timothy to remember the power and joy of the Good-News of the Risen Lord. On account of his faith Paul suffered, but nothing could chain up God's news.

Being a leper is never a great experience in life, nowadays as much as in the past. Naaman travelled from Syria, so blighted by war in our times, just to have a chance at being made whole. God listened to him even though he was a foreigner and pagan, cleansing him of his affliction. Naaman took the sacred earth of the Holy Land with Him to Syria in order to worship the One True God of that healing place. The 10 lepers yelled out to Jesus in hope of a cure, and their cry was heard. Yet, as St. Luke says, only one foreigner was grateful, giving his thanks to Jesus. Luke adds that Jesus said to this grateful man that his faith had saved him.

As we know good things can happen to people without faith, but only people of faith who have grateful hearts and thankful hearts can be saved by these good gifts. This is because they're able to see with the vision of their faith beyond the gift to the gracious Giver of all good gifts, God. Our Catholic Mass and liturgy is full of thanks and praise, reaching its pinnacle in the great Eucharistic prayer of gratefulness for the best gift God gives to us all, God's own life and Spirit in God's Son, the Risen Lord.

This is the medicine of healing that we, our Church and the whole world needs above anything else today; grateful, thankful and faith-filled hearts that can see the good, and Giver of all good gifts, living accordingly with joy each day under God's providential love and care. If we want our faith, our Mass and our worship to mean something then this is what we must do; live thankfully and gratefully right now, the heart of prayer and the Spirit and energy of Christ alive within us and active through all of us.