

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle C, October 10, 2010
(2 Kgs. 5:14-17; 2 Tm 2:8-13; Lk. 17:11-19)
The Ten Lepers

I have always been critical, cynical, or negative about the other nine lepers because.... I am sure that I would have been the lone leper that came back to thank Jesus, or if I had been the second one, I would have come back, too.

We always think of the lepers as men, but they could just as easily have been women.

But perhaps you and I could give the other nine the benefit of the doubt. Maybe they had good reasons for not returning, for instance:

1. The first one was simply too scared, too frightened to face Jesus.
2. He didn't like the idea of being cured so easily. He thought maybe he should have been required to do some extraordinary penance, something difficult; he never expected a cheap grace.
3. He came to the painful awareness that he liked the pain and humiliation; he couldn't live without his problem. Jesus had taken away his security blanket.
4. He was so happy about being free of leprosy, he forgot to come back and be grateful.
5. He had become accustomed to being felt sorry for by others, but now he wanted to be congratulated.
6. She, this leper was a woman, a wife and mother. For years she dreamed and cried to be back with her husband and children, embracing them, and they with her. She wasn't ungrateful, but her love and loneliness drove her first to her family.
7. He was an agnostic. He simply didn't believe in miracles. Somehow, his cure was an explainable event. He saw no real need to thank Jesus for a supposed miracle.
8. It was the deep faith and love of the eighth leper that prevented him from coming back to Jesus. He felt his gratitude would best be expressed by telling everyone about Jesus and his miraculous cure.
9. The ninth cured leper remains a puzzle. No one will ever quite know about him. He was happy and probably grateful. He touched and felt his new tan skinned body, muttered something and drifted away.

Sometimes we just don't know a person's personal reasons – his or her “why's”.

I would also like to add that there was an 11th leper. This leper was a woman who also thanked Jesus. She was able to locate Jesus because she stopped to ask for directions.

The story of the “lost nine lepers” should make us think about how easy it is to assign a negative interpretation upon another's motives; to be quick to judge, usually means to be quick to be unfair.

Concerning rash judgment, or jumping to conclusions, I am reminded of what Christ said, “For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged!” Christ meant what he said, and said what he meant!

Does God like to be thanked? Of course he does.

Does God insist on being thanked? Of course not.

When the giver insists and demands that thanks be given.....the gold in the gift turns to lead.

Jesus knew exactly what happened to the other nine.

Can we give one another the benefit of the doubt, or see the good in each other?

Can we be positive rather than negative?

There is an American Indian proverb, “Don't judge another man until you have walked in his moccasins for 3 days.”

Can we permit God to judge (who knows all the facts) rather than us who can judge so harshly.

What I love about God is that he doesn't judge a person until they die. We are still alive, yet we judge others. And who are we to judge anyone? Don't we have enough just taking care of ourselves?

Can we withhold judgment?

The good are not always good in all things, and the wicked are not always bad in all things either!

The separation of people into sheep and goats will take place only on the day of the last judgment. Until then we are forbidden to make any classification of other people.

Are we overly critical of our parents, husband or wife, brothers, sisters, relatives, friends, nuns, priests, principals, teachers, doctors, lawyers, neighbors, co-workers and bosses?

Judge not, lest you too will be judged and found wanting.

Christ says that we will be judged as we judge others.

So who appointed you judge?