

11. November 2020

“The Gratitude”

Lk 17:11-19

Now it happened that on the way to Jerusalem he was travelling in the borderlands of Samaria and Galilee. As he entered one of the villages, ten men suffering from a virulent skin-disease came to meet him. They stood some way off and called to him, 'Jesus! Master! Take pity on us.' When he saw them he said, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' Now as they were going away they were cleansed. Finding himself cured, one of them turned back praising God at the top of his voice and threw himself prostrate at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. This led Jesus to say, 'Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they? It seems that no one has come back to give praise to God, except this foreigner.' And he said to the man, 'Stand up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you.'

This deed of the Lord serves as a teaching that we should never forget.

First of all, we can always praise the mercy of the Lord, who in his goodness takes care of those in need. Leprosy meant that the sick had to live completely outside the human community because of the danger of infection. In addition, it was not uncommon for this to be seen as a punishment from God, adding to the isolation which was perhaps even more painful. But Jesus is not impressed by this and turns his love towards these people.

When we think of “leprosy”, sin comes to mind, which leaves a kind of “leprosy” in the soul of the person! This leprosy is not so easy to heal, because it leaves traces and characteristics which need a longer purification, liberation and healing. But also here the Lord does not leave us as orphans, but sends us with the Father the Holy Spirit (*cf. Jn 14:16*), who completes the work! What love the Lord shows us when he approaches the leprosy of sin and offers us his forgiveness and healing!

Nine of the ten lepers have forgotten to give the Lord the glory for healing. They were probably so pleased and relieved that they no longer thought of the Lord. So these healings lacked something very essential, namely the completion through the expression of gratitude!

This is always a lesson for us and needs to be verified! Do we thank the Lord for the gifts we receive? Perhaps the Lord answers prayers that were very important for us, but then we forget to thank the Lord properly and give Him the glory. Thus, something is missing from the realisation of the relationship with God, in that it is precisely through gratitude towards Him that an ever finer love unfolds and thus trust is strengthened!

We also know this on the human level: love unfolds much more easily with grateful people than with those who ask for gifts, but then no longer feel a connection to the giver. It is significant that it was the stranger - the Samaritan, often despised by the Jews - who showed the right attitude, which corresponded to the significance of the event!

If gratitude does not yet flow naturally from our hearts, if we often forget it or find it difficult to do so, then we should enter into a process of self-education and make it a rule to give thanks. Better too much than too little! Even if our heart has not yet awakened properly, we show with our will that we want to thank God, and the Lord will accept this. In time we will get used to giving thanks and will never forget it. Then our heart will also become more receptive and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we will remember and thank God's good deeds ever more quickly!