

Meditations: Sunday of the Twenty-Eighth Week of Ordinary Time (Year C)

Some reflections that can guide our prayer during the 28th week of Ordinary Time.

- God never turns his back on us
- More important than being healed
- Importance of giving thanks

WHEN PASSING through Samaria and Galilee on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus encountered ten lepers who began to cry out, from a distance: “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” (*Lk 17:13*). At that time, leprosy was a term used for various skin diseases that were considered contagious. Those who suffered from it were forced to live separate from their community. Thus they had to endure not only the physical trials of their illness, but also isolation and the stigma of their loved ones.

Anyone who came into contact with a leper was considered unclean, and couldn’t take part in the worship of God and had to be purified.

Moved by their plea, Jesus tells them: “Go and show yourselves to the priests” (*Lk 17:14*). And as they went on their way, they were healed. We too, when we present our petitions to God, have the certainty that He is the first to know our needs: Christ is

never indifferent to our pain. Indeed, He wants these trials to lead us to turn to Him, to trust in his grace. He is not ashamed of us, nor does he turn away when he sees our own “leprosy.”

This scene reminds us that “God never turns his back on us when we turn to him. The Lord always listens to us when we pray,” Pope Leo XIV assured us, “and if he sometimes responds in ways or at times that are difficult to understand, it is because he acts with a greater wisdom and providence that are beyond our understanding. Even in these moments, then, let us not cease to pray with confidence, for in him we will always find light and strength.”^[1] — Although at times our prayer may seem sterile because we don’t obtain what we ask for, in reality it always bears fruit: it breaks down the isolation of our own “leprosy” and

brings us closer to the Doctor who can always cure us.

ONLY ONE of the lepers who had been healed returned to thank our Lord: “and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks” (*Lk 17:16*). This person, moreover, was not an Israelite, but a Samaritan. Our Lord, on seeing this, said: “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” (*Lk 17:17-18*).

The other nine forgot about the person who had healed them and decided to go their own way. This is something that can also happen to us: failing to appreciate all that we have received as a gift. “This is an ugly spiritual illness, to take everything for granted, even faith,

even our relationship with God, to the point of becoming Christians who no longer know how to be amazed, who no longer know how to say ‘thank you,’ who no longer show gratitude, who no longer know how to see the wonders of the Lord.”^[2]

Outwardly they had been healed, but they failed to open their hearts to the greater good that God had prepared for them: drawing closer to the Messiah.

The Samaritan, in contrast, was eager to get to know Jesus and establish a relationship with him. His was not just a gesture of courtesy, but the beginning of a new life: “he falls at Jesus’ feet and worships him. He recognizes that Jesus is the Lord, that Jesus is more important than the healing he received.”^[3] He had discovered that being close to the Messiah was what he truly needed: this was, in the end, the main fruit of his prayer.

LIKE the Samaritan, we too should acknowledge all that we have received from God and those around us. This attitude helps us to realize that we can't stand on our own.

Gratitude leads us to "appreciate the presence in our lives of the God who is love. And to recognize the importance of others, overcoming the dissatisfaction and indifference that disfigure our hearts."^[4] —

Every day presents many opportunities to express our gratitude: for the kind gestures we receive from our families, for the service provided by a merchant, for the help offered by a colleague, for the closeness and support of friends... In each of these moments, we can also see the hand of God and thank Him for having placed these people at our side. We can also thank Him for so many things we aren't

even fully aware of, but which are part of our lives: the care of our parents when we were young, the silent prayer of a friend, the favors God grants us that we don't even notice...

Mothers are often the ones who teach their children the importance of giving thanks on receiving a gift. Today we can ask our heavenly Mother to help us be like the Samaritan in the Gospel: grateful for all that her Son does for us, and determined to stay close to Him. “Have you seen the gratitude of little children?” Saint Josemaría asked. “Imitate them, saying to Jesus, when things are favorable and when they aren’t: ‘How good you are!’”^[5]

^[1] Leo XIV, Angelus, 27 July 2025.

^[2] Francis, Homily, 9 October 2022.

^[3] Ibid.

^[4] Ibid.

^[5] St. Josemaría, *The Way*, no. 894.

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