

First reading 2 Kings 5:14-17**Naaman returned to the man of God and confessed his faith in the Lord.**

In those days: Naaman the Syrian went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of Elisha, the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and he came and stood before him. And he said, 'Behold, I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel; so accept now a present from your servant.' But Elisha said, 'As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I will receive none.' And Naaman urged Elisha to take it, but he refused. Then Naaman said, 'If not, please let there be given to your servant two mule-loads of earth, for from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the Lord.'

Responsorial Psalm PS98(97): 1-4.R1a**The Lord has shown his salvation to the nations.**

O sing a new song to the Lord,
for he has worked wonders.
His right hand and his holy arm
have brought salvation.

The Lord has made known his salvation,
has shown his deliverance to the nations.
He has remembered his merciful love
and his truth for the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
Shout to the Lord, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song,
and sing out your praise.

Second reading 2 Timothy 2:8-13**'If we endure, we will also reign with Christ.'**

Beloved: Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful — for he cannot deny himself.

Gospel Acclamation 1 Thessalonians 5:18**Alleluia, alleluia.**

In everything give thanks;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
Alleluia.

Gospel Luke 17:11-19**'No one was found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner.'**

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.' When he saw them he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, 'Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' And he said to him, 'Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.'

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Feast Days this week

Monday 13th October: St Edward the Confessor

Tuesday 14th October: St Callistus

Wednesday 15th October: St Teresa of Avila

Thursday 16th October: St Margaret Mary Alacoque, St Richard Gwyn (Walaes)

Friday 17th October: St Ignatius of Antioch

Saturday 18th October: St Luke

The Cycle of Prayer**Prisoners and their Families**

especially on Prisoners Sunday (2nd Sunday on October) and in Prisons Week (2nd Week in October)

Background

Prisoner's week was a Catholic initiative begun in 1975 by Bishop Victor Guazelli which has since ecumenical support and observance. It reflects the work of the Prison Advice and Care Trust which builds on its origins as the Bourne Trust — the Catholic Prisoner's Aid Society. The Sunday and the following week seek to focus attention not only on the needs of prisoners but on all those involved in the field of prison care, prisoners families, victims of crime, prison staff and many volunteers.

Prayer

*Almighty and merciful God,
to whom alone the secrets of the heart lie open,
who recognize the just and make righteous the guilty,
bear our prayers for your servants held in prison,
and grant that through patience and hope
they may find relief in their affliction
and soon return unbindered to their own.*

Roman Missal

Doing God's will

Sometimes we pride ourselves in having such a good democratic system, a claim which indeed is debatable. We value individual freedom and liberty, the right to choose and decide for ourselves how to live our lives. But the populace can be swayed by pressure groups and allow hardship and curtailment of liberty to be the lot of migrants and asylum-seekers. And while we do not suffer dictators gladly sometimes we seem to want to dictate to God, make God do things our way, and leave us masters of our own destiny. Some even abandon faith and prayer, because God has not granted their requests.

This was the inclination of Naaman the leper, an army commander from Syria, as he bargained with God. Hoping to be cured of leprosy by prophet Elisha, Naaman arrived laden with gifts of silver and gold, to pay for his cure. The prophet did not even come out to meet him, but sent a message telling him to wash seven times in the river Jordan. Naaman was so hurt that he prepared to return to Syria, raging with indignation. Why wash in this particular river, when there were so many bigger and cleaner rivers at home? "Here was I thinking Elisha would cure the leprous part," he fumed.

It was only when his servants pointed out how simple was the prescription that he was persuaded to try it and so was cured. Come to think of it, how often do we behave like Naaman. "Why do I have to go to church, when I can worship God out in the open air?" "Why does God send me the cross of sickness, when I could do so much good if I were healthy?" We even find such attitudes among the apostles. "Why do you not show us the Father?" Philip said to him. Some complained, "He says intolerable things and how could anyone accept it?" and they walked with him no more. This reaction of unbelief is often found. But it stands to Naaman's credit that he thought again, was cured and then returned to thank Elisha.

As Shakespeare wrote in King Lear, "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." The Eucharist is a reminder never to forget God's greatest gift to us, his own Son, our Saviour. If we concentrate too much on asking for things, there is a danger that we may reduce our Mass to the level of magical thinking, a way of turning God to our way of thinking. How much better if we can open our hearts and our lives to whatever God wants for us, which is sure to be the best that can happen to us in the long run.

We are meant to pray "thy will be done", not demand to have our own way. When we need a favour, we must ask for it with prayer and thanksgiving, because God answers prayer, even if not precisely in the way we expect. Ultimately, says Jesus, God grants only what is for our good. We need to thank God from the heart, like Naaman after his cure, or like the leper who was grateful to Jesus. What a pity the other nine did not say a word of thanks for the blessing they received.

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