

Dear Parishioners,

Sharing is something that is learned. In some families, children grow up alone or with only one sibling. The natural give-and-take coming from interacting with others is much more limiting for them. These children often have their own bedroom, own TV, own video games, own cell phones, etc. So much is given to them that they never really learn sharing, never really learn the natural give-and-take, so essential to grow into healthy relationships with others. In other families, less is more. The children don't have their own everything. Early on they learn to share, to give-and-take, to say thank you. Having said all that, sharing is fundamental to healthy relationships.

In this weekend's Gospel, Jesus shares much with the ten lepers. They ask Jesus to take pity on them and He heals them. But only the Samaritan leper returns to Jesus, glorifies God, and gives thanks. This leper understands the give-and-take of healthy relationships. He reveals himself as someone who knew he needed healing, but also as someone compelled to return to his Healer, throw himself at His feet, and further the fledgling relationship begun with the healing. For this action he received even more than physical healing. He hears Jesus declare to him, "*your faith has saved you.*" **This is faith.** Knowing who we are before God, gratefully coming to God, and ever deepening our relationship with God. And for this we should always give thanks.

The ten lepers exemplify aspects of our own relationships with God: acknowledgment of need ("*Have pity on us!*"), obedience ("*Go ...' As they were going*"), and reception of Divine Mercy ("*they were cleansed*"). The Samaritan leper demonstrates another aspect of this relationship. Only when he returns to glorify God and to thank Jesus, does Jesus reveal that he has, in fact, been saved. For us, as for the Samaritan leper, salvation is revealed and experienced in the mutual sharing of an ever-deepening relationship.

Salvation, worship, and thanksgiving cement a give-and-take relationship with God. God freely offers us salvation. Worship and thanksgiving manifest within the community our acknowledgment and reception of salvation. Worship and thanksgiving are our **yes** to God's gifts to us. They are our response in faith to a God who shares so much with us that we come to share everlasting life in God's eternal glory.

This is what happens on our journey to Jerusalem with Jesus. On the way, each one of us is cleansed – saved. This is one reason why the little things of our everyday lives – those things which happen to us along the journey – are so important. They are manifestations of God's acting on our behalf, healing us, and saving us. We want to seize them and give thanks. In this divine-human give-and-take, we learn that gratitude is an expression of faith. It is a deepening of our relationship with God and with one another.

One challenge of this weekend's Gospel is to see God's promise of salvation unfolding in the everyday events of our lives. Faithful service to others is a response to seeing God in the ordinary events of each day. Gratitude – acknowledging God's actions on our behalf – is an all-enveloping context for living our lives. When gratitude is put on as a way of living, then faith and worship, too, become a way of living. Rather than being relegated to an hour or so on Saturday evening or Sunday, worship becomes a part of all the little actions which make up each of our days. For that, we should give thanks!

May Saint Michael the Archangel defend, guide, protect, and intercede for us always!

Fr. Larry