

**28<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**October 14, 2007**

## *Thank you, God!*

### **Introduction**

*Dear brothers and sisters: Today's Gospel narrates the story of the ten lepers cured by Jesus. Only one—a Samaritan and therefore a stranger—returns to Jesus and gives thanks. The nine probably go straight to the temple to fulfil the regulation prescribed by the Jewish law. But to go to God is to go to Jesus. To glorify God is to do it through Jesus. For it is through his Son Jesus that God chooses to save us. Today we also celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Sunday and Extreme Poverty Day. We are reminded that the Lord is present in peoples who appear different from the majority. Just as in their time people least expected Naaman the Syrian and the Samaritan leper to render to the Lord what was due to him, we may be surprised to know that the indigenous peoples and the poorest of the poor are rich in values regarding life and reverence to the Creator. Poverty and our indigenous brethren have much to teach us. (Taken for Sambuhay)*

### **First Reading**

*Naaman, a Syrian and a foreigner, is cured of leprosy and gratefully honors the God of Israel. He reminds us of the Samaritan leper in the Gospel.*

### **A reading from the second Book of Kings (5:14-17)**

NAAMAN went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times at the word of Elisha, the man of God. His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean of his leprosy. Naaman returned with his whole retinue to the man of God. On his arrival he stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel. Please accept a gift from your servant." Elisha replied, "As the Lord lives whom I serve, I will not take it," and despite Naaman's urging, he still refused. Naaman said: "If you will not accept, please let me, your servant, have two mule-loads of earth, for I will no longer offer holocaust or sacrifice to any other god except to the Lord."

### **Responsorial Psalm (Ps 98)**

**The Lord has revealed to the nations his saving power.**

1. Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done wondrous deeds; his right hand has won victory for him, his holy arm.
2. The Lord has made his salvation known: in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice. He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness/ toward the house of Israel.
3. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation by our God. Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you lands: break into song; sing praise.

### **Second Reading**

*The apostle Paul says that the salvation brought about by the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus is the culmination of all God's gifts. Gratitude prompts us to be loyal to Jesus to the end.*

### **A reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (2:8-13)**

BELOVED: Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David: such is my gospel, for which I am suffering, even to the point of chains, like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore, I bear with everything for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, together with eternal glory. This saying is trustworthy: If we have died with him we shall also live with him; if we persevere we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him he will deny us. If we are unfaithful he will remain faithful, for he cannot deny himself.

### **Gospel**

### **A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke. (Lk 17:11-19)**

AS JESUS continued his journey to Jerusalem, he travelled through Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met him. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" Then he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."

### **The World of the Gospel**

Gil Alinsangan, SSP

#### **Jesus as God's Broker**

True leprosy or Hansen's disease almost certainly did not exist in Palestine in Jesus' time; not a trace of it has been found in the bones excavated in Israel. What the Bible calls "leprosy" (Hebrew *zaraat*) is any skin ailment characterized by an eruptive skin disease, and it was feared not because it was contagious but because it was polluting, making individuals or community "impure" or "unclean." The purity laws of Leviticus 11-15 deal with boundaries. Anything that crosses the "body boundary" or opening renders a person unclean: e.g., male or female bodily discharges (even involuntary). The scaly, eruptive condition like leprosy breaks the skin boundary so it is considered unclean. Lepers were considered unclean and were excluded from the community; they were to remain outside the societal, geographical, and religious boundaries. The Samaritans were also outside the religious boundary of the Jews; they were considered "unclean" because they were seen as not possessing pure religion and blood. The Jews had nothing to do with the Samaritans, but in the case of the ten lepers in the Gospel, leprosy which drove them out of the "holy" community bound them together. Jesus was constantly challenging existing boundaries and pushing them outward. He welcomed sinners, the blind, and tax collectors in his "holy community." He let himself be touched by the impure like the woman with the flow of blood, and healed lepers. He showed himself as a powerful intermediary or broker of God who alone could heal. Nine of those healed went to

Jerusalem to “praise” God in the presence of the priests. Only one came back “to praise God” in the presence of Jesus. Only one gave praise to God and his agent or broker, Jesus.

**29<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**October 21, 2007**

## *Sharing the Gift of Faith*

### **Introduction**

*Today, we celebrate World Mission Sunday. And as the gospel teaches us the necessity of praying always without becoming weary, we pray for all the missionaries here and abroad who responded zealously to Jesus command: “Go... make disciples of all nations... baptize them... teach them all I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). Moses’ arms upraised in prayer give victory to the Israelites. Jesus also assures us that God is a loving Father who listens to us his children who pray to him in confidence that we, especially our Christians missionaries, be given what we need. (taken from Sambuhay)*

### **First Reading**

*The outstretched hands of Moses during the Israelites’ battle against the Amalekites assure Israel’s victory. This story illustrates to us the power of prayer.*

### **A reading from the Book of Exodus (17:8-13)**

IN THOSE days, Amalek came and waged war against Israel. Moses, therefore, said to Joshua, “Pick out certain men, and tomorrow go out and engage Amalek in battle. I will be standing on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.” So Joshua did as Moses told him: he engaged Amalek in battle after Moses had climbed to the top of the hill with Aaron and Hur. As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest, Amalek had the better of the fight. Moses’ hands, however, grew tired; so they put a rock in place for him to sit on. Meanwhile Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other, so that his hands remained steady till sunset. And Joshua mowed down Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

### **Responsorial Psalm (Ps 121)**

**Our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.**

1. I lift up my eyes toward the mountains; whence shall help come to me? My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
2. May he not suffer your foot to slip; may he slumber not who guards you: indeed he neither slumbers nor sleeps, the guardian of Israel.
3. The Lord is your guardian; the Lord is your shade; he is beside you at your right hand. The sun shall not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

4. The Lord will guard you from all evil; he will guard your life. The Lord will guard your coming and your going, both now and forever.

### **Second Reading**

*The apostle Paul asks Timothy— and us—to remain faithful to the teachings of Christ and to equip ourselves for good work through our recourse to the Scriptures.*

### **A reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (3:14—4:2)**

BELOVED: Remain faithful to what you have learned and believed, because you know from whom you learned it, and that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, which are capable of giving you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work. I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.

### **Gospel**

### **A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke. (Lk 18:1-8)**

JESUS told his disciples a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary. He said, “There was a judge in a certain town who neither feared God nor respected any human being. And a widow in that town used to come to him and say, ‘Render a just decision for me against my adversary.’ “For a long time the judge was unwilling, but eventually he thought, ‘While it is true that I neither fear God nor respect any human being, because this widow keeps bothering me I shall deliver a just decision for her lest she finally come and strike me.’ ” The Lord said, “Pay attention to what the dishonest judge says. Will not God then secure the rights of his chosen ones who call out to him day and night? Will he be slow to answer them? I tell you, he will see to it that justice is done for them speedily. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

### **The World of The Gospel**

Gil Alinsangan, SSP

### **Dishonest Judge**

The Greek word *krites* (judge) translates the Hebrew *shophet*. It refers not to one who tried cases and rendered judgment but properly to a petty ruler, or a magistrate. In fact, in the history of Israel, *shophet* was the name given to rulers who presided over the affairs of the chosen people during the interval between the death of Joshua and the accession of Saul as the first king of Israel (Jgs 2:18). The judge restored order in a period of general anarchy and confusion. Among the more known judges in Israel were Gideon, Samson, and Deborah. Samuel was called by the Lord to be more of a prophet. Eli, the priest, seemed to have exercised the office of a judge “ex officio.” Moses seemed to have also practiced the office of a judge (Ex 2:14). The Roman rulers at the time of Jesus appointed “judges” for the people

they conquered. This practice, as Jesus notes in his parable, seemed to have made some of these magistrates abusive and corrupt. The judge in Israel was expected to defend the widow and her orphaned children (Is 1:17; Ps 82:3-4). But since the judge of the parable neither fears God nor respects any human being, he refuses to give the widow what is her due (she is asking for justice, not charity). He has enough sense, though: he sees that if he wants to have peace and be freed from her nagging, he has to give her a just decision. Even a wicked judge can be influenced by a persistent petitioner. God, who is a loving Father, listens to our prayers and acts on them in ways that are oftentimes unfathomable. But they are always for our own good.

**30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**October 28, 2007**

## *Close to Sinners*

### **Introduction**

*Dear brothers and sisters: God dwells in hearts emptied of selfishness and pride. When we include our neighbors in our prayers, let our intention be for their well-being and welfare. Prayer should be free from boasting and pretension. Before God, we should learn to strike our breast and recognize that we, like other people, are in need of his mercy and compassion. Thus as today the Church in the Philippines celebrates Prison Awareness Sunday, we include in our prayers the people behind prison bars, who need to experience God's love, mercy, and compassion. They are our brothers and sisters whom God wants us to visit, understand, and sustain in hope. (Taken from Sambuhay)*

### **First Reading**

*People may turn a deaf ear to the cries of the poor and the weak, but not God. Sirach tells us that the prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds and goes straight to God.*

### **A reading from the Book of Sirach (35:12-14, 16-18)**

THE Lord is a God of justice, who knows no favorites. Though not unduly partial toward the weak, yet he hears the cry of the oppressed. The Lord is not deaf to the wail of the orphan, nor to the widow when she pours out her complaint. The one who serves God willingly is heard; his petition reaches the heavens. The prayer of the lowly pierces the clouds; it does not rest till it reaches its goal, nor will it withdraw till the Most High responds, judges justly, and affirms the right, and the Lord will not delay.

### **Responsorial Psalm (Ps 34)**

#### **The Lord hears the cry of the poor.**

1. I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall be ever in my mouth. Let my soul glory in the Lord; the lowly will hear me and be glad.
2. The Lord confronts the evildoers, to destroy remembrance of them from the earth. When the just cry out, the Lord hears them, and from all their distress he rescues them.

3. The Lord is close to the broken hearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves. The Lord redeems the lives of his servants;/ no one incurs guilt who takes refuge in him.

### **Second Reading**

*Paul is in prison and anticipates his death, but he faces his martyrdom as the crowning of his struggles for the Lord and for the Gospel.*

#### **A reading from the second Letter of Paul to Timothy (4:6-8,16-18)**

BELOVED: I am already being poured out like a libation, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me, which the Lord, the just judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but to all who have longed for his appearance. At my first defense no one appeared on my behalf, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the proclamation might be completed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was rescued from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil threat and will bring me safe to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

### **Gospel**

#### **A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke. (Lk 18:9-14)**

JESUS addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. "Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, 'O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity—greedy, dishonest, adulterous—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.' "But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, 'O God, be merciful to me a sinner.' "I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

### **The World of The Gospel**

Gil Alinsangan, SSP

## **Two Kinds of Prayer**

Prayer states one's relationship with God. The way we pray reveals that relationship. The Pharisee prays as a character who "prays to himself" or "with reference to himself." What he spells out is quiet true: his observance of the Law goes beyond the legal requirements. But his prayer has been transformed into boasting. He has become full of himself that he seems not to need God anymore. Moreover, he assumes the role of the judge and despises others. He reminds God of the deficiency of the tax collector, in case God had not noticed. In contrast to the prayer of the puffed-up Pharisee, that of the tax collector is of utter simplicity and truth. Indeed he is a sinner. Indeed he needs God's gift of righteousness because he has none of his own. In praying to God to have mercy on him, he asks God to give him what God "owes" him: mercy and forgiveness. At the end of the story, the tax collector is the one justified by God, that is, God has placed him in the right relationship with him. The Pharisee

needed nothing and asked for nothing; he received nothing. The tax collector, by contrast, recognized he needed God's gift of righteousness, and so he received it.

**31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**November 14, 2007**

## *The God Full of Surprises!*

### **Introduction**

*Dear brothers and sisters: The Lord Jesus repeatedly warns us of the danger of riches, how they can blind us to the pitiful condition of the poor. The Gospel presents to us the right attitude in the example of Zacchaeus. This tax collector declares he is ready to share half of his wealth with the poor and to repay four times whatever he may have extorted from anyone. Though short of stature, Zacchaeus has a big heart, thus winning Jesus' praise for him as a true descendant of Abraham. As we celebrate our liturgy, may we realize that we store up treasures for ourselves in heaven by being "rich in what matters to God" and helping our poor brothers and sisters (see Lk 12:21, 33). (Taken from Sambuhay)*

### **First Reading**

*The Lord is a merciful God who loves all things that are. He rebukes offenders that they may abandon their wickedness.*

### **A reading from the Book of Wisdom (11:22—12:2)**

BEFORE the Lord the whole universe is as a grain from a balance or a drop of morning dew come down upon the earth. But you have mercy on all, because you can do all things; and you overlook people's sins that they may repent. For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made; for what you hated, you would not have fashioned. And how could a thing remain, unless you willed it; or be preserved, had it not been called forth by you? But you spare all things, because they are yours, O Lord and lover of souls, for your imperishable spirit is in all things! Therefore you rebuke offenders little by little, warn them and remind them of the sins they are committing, that they may abandon their wickedness and believe in you, O Lord!

### **Responsorial Psalm (Ps 145)**

**I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.**

1. I will extol you, O my God and King; and I will bless your name forever and ever. Every day will I bless you; and I will praise your name forever and ever.
2. The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. The Lord is good to all and compassionate toward all his works.
3. Let all your works give you thanks, O Lord, and let your faithful ones bless you. Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom/ and speak of your might.

4. The Lord is faithful in all his words and holy in all his works. The Lord lifts up all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down.

### **Second Reading**

*While we await the coming of Christ in glory, we are not alarmed by dire predictions. Rather, we attend peacefully and diligently to good works.*

### **A reading from the second Letter of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians (1:11—2:2)**

BROTHERS and sisters: We always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and powerfully bring to fulfillment every good purpose and every effort of faith, that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, in accord with the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ. We ask you, brothers and sisters, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling with him, not to be shaken out of your minds suddenly, or to be alarmed either by a “spirit,” or by an oral statement, or by a letter allegedly from us to the effect that the day of the Lord is at hand.

### **Gospel**

### **A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke. (Lk 19:1-10)**

AT THAT TIME, Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house.” And he came down quickly and received him with joy. When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, “He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner.” But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost.”

## **The World of The Gospel**

Gil Alinsangan, SSP

### **Tax Collectors**

The Jews in Jesus’ time were burdened by state and religious taxes. State taxes were paid to Rome and Herod who imposed direct taxes on land properties and individuals (head taxes). Moreover, indirect taxes were imposed on transit trade and market exchanges. On the other hand, religious taxes were paid to the Jerusalem temple: head and land taxes for the support of priests, and taxes for sacrificial offerings and vows. Herod Antipas or the Roman governor sold “rights” to collect taxes to “brokers” (*telonai*, commonly translated as “tax collectors”). These offered fixed amounts and contracted partners and hired laborers to help with the collections. Taxes were usually overpriced for the brokers to recover their “capital” and have profits. The heavy taxes were a great burden to the people, and the brokers could be looked

upon as robbers and thieves, due to feelings or perceptions of injustice. In the Gospel, people (probably the Pharisees) are shown to avoid Zacchaeus; they also condemn Jesus for staying at the house of a sinner. Jesus answers that he has come to seek and to save what was lost. Affirming that Zacchaeus is also a descendant of Abraham and worthy of being sought, Jesus neither condemns nor ostracizes him but loves him and sits down to a meal with him. Jesus' ministry is a healing one, and it is directed at those who are honest enough to accept that they need help.