

The Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time/Year
C – 8/9 October 2016 – Observance of the 73rd
Anniversary of the Naming of the Parish (Our Lady of
the Rosary, 7 October 2016); Mass Counts at all of
the Weekend Masses –
Our Lady of Victory Parish Community –
HOMILY

1st Reading:

2 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. . . . Please accept a gift from your servant. . . . As the Lord lives whom I serve, I will not take it,”

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 98 - *Sung*

2nd Reading:

2 Timothy 2:8-13

- “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, 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 remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.**”

GOSPEL:

LUKE 17:11-19

- “. . . he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. . . . ten lepers met him. . . . “Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!” “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; . . . He was a Samaritan. . . . “Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?” . . . “Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.”

i. O.K. . . . we have in the Scriptures this weekend, in particular, in the first reading from Second Kings and in the Gospel: (1) The recognition and expressed needs of some individuals to be healed of something; (2) coincidentally, the particular “something” has ostracized them from the life of the communities they were a part of; (3) In one case, the case of Naaman, he approaches Elisha, and who Elisha represents . . . “man of God” . . . Elisha is an Israelite, and Naaman is a Syrian . . . Naaman is a foreigner, yet he seeks healing through Elisha and the God of Israel. In another case . . . the Gospel . . . it appears that the 10 lepers who approached Jesus were a mixed group . . . 9, apparently, were Jews, and 1 was a Samaritan. Again, we have a “foreigner” involved, who turns to someone outside his community. And: (4) in both cases, healing takes place, and, in both cases, it is the foreigner who recognizes that they have been mysteriously; miraculously healed, while in the case of the Gospel, it appears that the 9 Jews not only may not have realized it, but lacked any sense of gratitude. ***Great stuff for a Homily . . . or Homilies: on healing . . . on how Jesus breaks all barriers to literally reach out and heal not just the infirmity but the individual . . . on gratitude, but, not this weekend . . .***

No. For some strange reason, I chose what turned out to be a much harder path and use the Reading from Saint Paul’s Second Letter to Timothy . . . because I needed to try to figure out just what Paul was trying to

communicate to us . . . in a particular portion of that reading . . .

II. I was, and remain, O.K. with, “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.”

That is logical . . . we hear it preached and taught all the time that, in and through the Sacrament of Baptism, each of us has died with Christ . . . so that we might rise again with Him. It’s part of the core of our faith . . . and, we also hear that, with God’s grace and help, if we persevere through the trials of life . . . if we keep our focus on the Lord and do not stray . . . the promise of entering into eternal life . . . of seeing God face-to-face will come to fruition. Again, fundamental to what we believe . . .

But then . . . **THEN** . . . it got complicated. “But if we deny him, he will deny us.” . . . (yet) . . . “If we are unfaithful he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.”

WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT PAUL?? At least for me, I thought “denying” something . . . or in this case . . . “someone” isn’t any different than being “unfaithful” . . .

III. Alas . . . I went the route of finding out just what **deny** and **unfaithful** mean . . .

To **deny** something or someone is to take a stand that the **something** or **someone** is just not true . . . to **deny** something or someone is to **refuse** to **accept** or **admit** that something or someone . . . Lastly . . . to **deny** is to **refuse** to give **something** to **someone**, but also, to **prevent** someone from **having** or **receiving** something.

On the other hand, to be **unfaithful** is to **not adhere to vows, allegiance, or duty** . . . **serious**, yes . . . not an attitude of any who **REALLY** believe in the Lord . . . but, as serious as being unfaithful is . . . not as **deadly** as outright **denial**.

You see . . . if we are honest with ourselves . . . each and every one of us has been **unfaithful** to the Lord . . . for each and every one of us has **sinned** . . . and each time we **sin**, we chose not to **adhere to our vows** . . . **our baptismal vows** . . . each and every time we **sin**, we show **allegiance to our needs and wants** rather than the **needs and wants of others** . . . rather than **allegiance to the Lord** . . . “Whatever you did not do for the least . . . you did not do for me” . . . we hear in Matthew’s Gospel . . . each and every time we **sin**, we are not faithful to our **duty** . . . to speak and act as His disciples . . . not just when it is easy or convenient . . . but every moment of every day . . . But, Jesus knows this about us . . . which is why, when we are **unfaithful** . . . when we become that **one sheep** who strayed from the other 99, or the **one coin** who got separated from the other 9 . . . or that **one son** who

took his inheritance and threw it and a lot of his life away . . . yes . . . Jesus knows this about us and goes after us . . . he will never **deny** himself . . . that part of him that we have become through baptism . . . for he will be **true** to himself . . . and keep offering himself to us . . . waiting patiently for us to receive him . . . take him in . . . let him permeate our very being . . .

But when we deny Him . . . when we flatly refuse to believe . . . or accept and admit that He is the way, the truth and the life . . . the **only** way . . . the **only** truth . . . the **only life** . . . that Jesus is all that completes us and makes us whole . . . when we refuse to give ourselves over to him . . . or accept the gift of his very self that he offers to us . . . we make a deadly choice, for in our refusal, we cut ourselves off from the only life-line that matters . . .

Jesus will never **deny** the unfaithful one . . . he will never **deny** the sinner . . . may we always, **ALWAYS** seek the grace we need to grow in our faithfulness to Him . . . but more . . . to make choices that will **never, NEVER** deny Him . . .