

"FIRST IMPRESSIONS"

28th SUNDAY -C-

October 12, 2025

[2 Kings 5: 14-17](#); [Psalm 98](#); [2 Timothy 2: 8-13](#); [Luke 17:11-19](#)

By: **Jude Siciliano**, OP



Dear Preachers:

In our first reading today, we step into the narrative from the Second Book of Kings. But who is this Naaman, and why is he plunging seven times into the Jordan River? What is happening here, and how does it connect to our Gospel reading? (*The first reading on Sunday is usually chosen from the Hebrew Scriptures because of its connection to the day's Gospel.*)

Naaman was the Syrian commander of the king of Aram, a frequent enemy of Israel. He had contracted leprosy and, through his Israelite wife, learned that the prophet Elisha might cure him. Naaman traveled to Elisha, the successor of Elijah, who instructed him simply to bathe in the Jordan seven times. Naaman had expected something more dramatic—rituals, sacrifices, or at least a grand gesture. Instead, he was told to wash in what he considered an unimpressive river.

When Naaman was healed, he offered Elisha a gift, which the prophet refused. Naaman then asked to take home two loads of Israel's soil, believing that a god's power was tied to its land. By taking earth with him, he hoped to bring home the power of Israel's God—the one who had healed him. Here a foreigner is cured by Israel's God, a clear sign that divine blessing is not confined to one people but is meant for all. Our Gospel echoes this same truth: Jesus heals a leper who was a Samaritan, a foreigner and enemy in the eyes of Israel.

As a child in parochial school, one of our heroes was St. Damien of Molokai, long admired for his work among people with leprosy in Hawaii. When he began one of his homilies to his congregation of lepers with the words, "We lepers..." he revealed that he too had contracted their disease.

In the United States, there was once a leprosarium in Carville, Louisiana, founded in 1894 on the site of an abandoned sugar plantation. It eventually became a hospital for the study and treatment of Hansen's disease (the modern name for leprosy). In its early days, however, there was no cure, and those admitted entered under mandatory quarantine—many never leaving again. Fear of leprosy was intense, given its disfiguring effects on the body.

Imagine, then, the powerful witness of Damien on Molokai. His presence was a sign of friendship and of Christ's living presence among the suffering. In a real sense, Damien embodied what Jesus himself did in today's Gospel, when ten lepers approached him on the road to Jerusalem.

Leprosy may no longer be a daily fear for us, but many still experience isolation. A friend once told me that after her husband's death, leaving her with three children, she asked herself, "What did I do that God would punish me so?" At church she sat in the back, numb, feeling cut off from families around her. "They were not like me—I felt like a leper," she said. What deepened her pain was this: "I never heard my situation spoken about in homilies." She felt physically, emotionally, and spiritually excluded—a kind of "spiritual leprosy."

Others describe similar feelings. One woman, active in her parish and a lector at Mass, said after her husband left her: "As a divorced person in the Church, I felt like a leper."

The band of lepers in the Gospel lived such isolation daily. They were seen as untouchables—feared even by their own families. They formed what might be called a "community of the isolated." Their shared suffering broke down barriers between Jew and Samaritan; enemies found solidarity in grief, pain, and loneliness. To make matters worse, people believed their illness was punishment for sin, leaving them burdened with guilt for a sin they could not even name.

As someone has said: "No matter what our differences, when we hurt, we all shed the same tears." Pain can unite us across divisions. We see it today when hunger, bombings, and death bring people together in places like Gaza, Ukraine, and Sudan.

In the Gospel, the lepers cry out together, united in their need: "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" Jesus responds with a command: "Go show yourselves to the priests." Their healing unfolds as they journey. Most likely, they believed God had healed them, and so they obeyed by heading toward the Temple. But one man—the least expected, a Samaritan—realized what had happened. He recognized Jesus himself as the source of his healing. He returned, fell at Jesus' feet, and gave thanks.

Many of us, too, seek healing—whether from illness, grief, sin, or the inability to forgive. Sometimes God's grace is dramatic and unmistakable, but more often it

comes quietly, gradually, as we travel through life. Like the lepers, we voice our needs along the way: forgiveness, patience, compassion, the strength to love those we find hardest to love. The healing usually happens, not in an instant, but "on the road."

Like the Samaritan, we sometimes come to realize that change has taken place—greater strength, patience, generosity, renewal. And we know this has not come from us alone. Jesus' words ring true: "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."

There is still more to come, more healing yet to be done in us. But here and now, at this altar, we pause to give thanks. At the start of every Eucharist, we echo the lepers' plea: "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" And here we realize that he has extended mercy to us again—as he does each time we ask.

We are being healed on the road. We travel together as a pilgrim people, and we return here, week after week, to the source of our healing and nourishment: the Eucharist.

Click here for a link to this Sunday's readings:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/101225.cfm>

JUSTICE BULLETIN BOARD



"The Lord has made his salvation known: in the sight of the nations, he has revealed his justice" —Psalm 98: 2

The readings today deal with Naaman the Syrian (2 Kings 5:14-17) and Samaritan lepers (Luke 17:11-19)--outsiders that exemplify God looking to reclaim all creation in binding relationship. "Solidarity" may be a relatively new word for us (Pope John Paul II made it well-known in his campaign to empower Poland as it was coming out of communism). For a definition we can look to the pontifical document, On Social Concern ([*Sollicitudo rei Socialis*](#). . .), which states, "[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all" (38). This concept is not new to the Bible as we see in the following passages:

§ [Genesis 12:1-3](#) God blessed Israel so that all nations would be blessed through it.

§ [Psalms 72](#) Living in right relationship with others brings peace.

§ [Psalms 122](#) Peace be with you! For the sake of the Lord, I will seek your good.

· [Zechariah 8:16](#) These are the things you should do: Speak truth, judge well, make peace.

· [Matthew 5:9](#) Blessed are the peacemakers; they will be called children of God.

· [Matthew 5:21-24](#) Be reconciled to one another before coming to the altar.

· [Romans 13:8-10](#) Living rightly means to love one another.

· [1 Corinthians 12:12-26](#) If one member of Christ's body suffers, all suffer. If one member is honored, all rejoice.

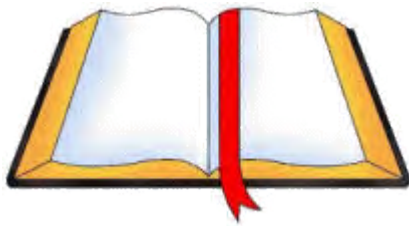
· [Colossians 3:9-17](#) Above all, clothe yourself with love and let the peace of Christ reign in your hearts.

· [1 John 3:16-18](#) The love of God in us is witnessed to by our willingness to lay down our lives for others as Christ did for us.

Next weekend is World Mission Sunday. Our late Pope Francis chose the theme, "Missionaries of Hope Among All People." He reminds us that hope is at the heart of the Christian mission, calling every baptized person to be "messengers and builders of hope" in a world that often finds itself overshadowed by uncertainty and despair. See what you can do to help build God's dream of a world in binding relationship to each other and God. Be a messenger of hope.

Barbara Molinari Quinby, MPS, Director
Office of Human Life, Dignity, and Justice Ministries
[Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral](#), Raleigh, NC

FAITH BOOK



Mini-reflections on the Sunday scripture readings designed for persons on the run. "Faith Book" is also brief enough to be posted in the Sunday parish bulletins people take home.

From today's Gospel reading:

When Jesus saw the lepers, he said,
"Go show yourselves to the priests."
As they were going they were cleansed."

Reflection:

The lepers' cure came as they traveled. Perhaps we too realize that the healings we need, the physical, emotional and spiritual ones, don't happen all at once, but occur as we travel, step by step, through life. Isn't that the way most of us come to wholeness – step by step – with the help of trusted family, friends, counselors, teachers, etc. who help us experience cleansing and renewal? Do we "realize," as the cured leper did, that it is Jesus who is the source of our healing?

So, we ask ourselves:

- Can I name some of the healings that have happened in my life through faith?
- How have I returned thanks to God for those healings?

POSTCARDS TO DEATH ROW INMATES

"One has to strongly affirm that condemnation to the death penalty is an inhuman measure that humiliates personal dignity, in whatever form it is carried out."

---Pope Francis

Inmates on death row are the most forgotten people in the prison system. Each week I am posting in this space several inmates' names and locations. I invite you to write a postcard to one or more of them to let them know that: we have not forgotten them; are praying for them and their families; or, whatever personal encouragement you might like to give them. *If the inmate responds, you might consider becoming pen pals.*

Please write to:

- Jeffery Meyer #0280127 (On death row since 2/4/1999)
- Ted Prevatte #0330166 (2/22/1999)
- Raymond Thibodeaux #0515143 (3/2/1999)

----Central Prison P.O. 247 Phoenix, MD 21131

Please note: **Central Prison** is in Raleigh, NC., but for security purposes, mail to inmates is processed through a clearing house at the above address in Maryland.

For more information on the Catholic position on the death penalty go to the Catholic Mobilizing Network: <http://catholicsmobilizing.org/resources/cacp/>

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