

Ordinary Time 28C

The Other Nine

I keep thinking about the other nine men Jesus cured, and I ask myself why they didn't return to thank him. I imagine their joy when the priests told them they were truly healed. For years and years they were required to live in isolation lest they spread their disease. But in a moment, everything changed. They were cleansed of their leprosy; they were restored to life. We might say that what happened to them is a parable of what happens to us when we come in contact with the risen Christ. In a moment our lives are forever changed.

But these men did not return to Jesus even though their lives had been so dramatically changed. In the joy and exuberance of the moment, they forgot to thank the one who changed their lives. But one man did not forget. One man returned to glorify God for what Jesus did for him. And he was foreigner, an outcast, a Samaritan. Nevertheless, he understood something the others did not. He understood what God had done for him Christ. He believed that God was at work in Jesus; and now his life would never be the same.

One man understood the deeper reality of what happened, the others did not. One man understood how power of God was at work in Jesus to change and transform his life, the others did not. *And so it is with us.* Sometimes we understand how the power of the risen Christ is at work in our lives, and other

times we do not. Sometimes we understand that God is always present to our lives—even in the midst of failure and tragedy—and other times we do not. Sometimes we know that the world is charged with the beauty and grandeur of God; and other times we do not.

Whether we acknowledge it or not, our lives are filled with moments God's grace and love for us in Christ. Whether we acknowledge it or now, we are bathed in God's grace every day. Whether we acknowledge it or not, the crucified and risen Christ is always present to our life. And when we know and acknowledge this, when we believe this, our lives are forever changed.

The risen Christ is present, here and now, in our worshiping community. The risen Christ has spoken to us today in the Word of Scripture we heard. The risen Christ is present in the sacraments we receive throughout our lives. We are baptized into Christ. Christ forgives our sins in the sacrament of the Reconciliation. The risen Christ feeds us with his body and blood in the Eucharist we are about to receive.

The Samaritan of today's gospel understood how God was present to his life in Christ, the other nine did not. He saw and understood what the others did not. *And so it is with us.* When we turn to Christ with all our heart and mind and soul, we see the presence of God in our lives, and this makes all the difference.