

DRAW NEAR

a four week preaching series during weekend Mass

HE KNOWS YOUR CHALLENGES; HIS PRESENCE HEALS YOU

“Jesus saw them...” Luke 17: 11-19

Week Two

THE GOSPEL

As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem,

he traveled 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.”

-Luke 17:11-19

THE CHALLENGE

One person came back to Jesus after he was cured of leprosy. Falling at Jesus’ feet, **he gave thanks**. The Greek word used for the phrase “to give thanks” is familiar to all of us. It names the most important thing we do at Church each week: the word is “Eucharist.”

The Church’s teaching on the Eucharist can be challenging. To claim that simple bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ... well that’s something downright hard to believe, especially considering that after the Consecration, it still looks and tastes like bread and wine.

And yet, we know that it is Jesus who first made the claim: “*This is my body... This is my blood*” (Mark 14:22, 24). Our hearts sense instinctively that we should trust the word of Christ, and yet we rely on our eyes which lead us to believe the teaching about Christ’s Real Presence in the Eucharist seems too good to be true. If we are expected to believe such an amazing teaching, then the Church has some explaining to do.

THE PREACHING

From the very beginning of the Church, the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist was understood and accepted by Christians. St. Paul asked the believers in Corinth: “*The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?*” (I Corinthians 10:16). When Jesus presented a crowd with the teaching on the Bread of Life, many of his disciples walked away and “*no longer accompanied Him*” (John 6:66). It appears that being a true disciple of Jesus depends squarely on whether or not you believe in the Eucharist.

Our senses are truly gifts from God that allow us to enjoy the physical world. But sometimes our senses deceive us. The way things look... the way things taste... Appearances **can** be misleading. That is how the Church understands what happens at the Eucharist. What appears to us on the surface of the bread and wine (the things we see, touch, taste, smell) doesn’t change during the Consecration. But by the power of Christ’s word, that which is substantial, the thing that makes the bread and wine what they are at their most basic level, transforms into something wholly different: the very Body and Blood of Jesus.



