

*Celebrating Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019...*

## **Sunday, 13 October 2019**

Lk 13:11-19

Fr. Jomi Pathikulangara CMI, Ghana

Today the universal Church is happy as five of her children are raised to the altar of the Lord. Let us express our gratitude to the heavenly father for giving these five pearls for the Church; as the central theme for this Sunday is gratitude.

In the first reading and the gospel passage we see the healing of the dreaded skin disease leprosy. In the first reading we see Namaan, army commander of the king of Aram; struck with leprosy, being healed by Prophet Elisha. Namaan was angry in the beginning as he was instructed by the prophet to wash himself at the River Jordan seven times. But still he agreed to do the same and he received the healing. It is a great lesson for us to be humble and submissive in our prayer always. We should expect immediate response from God always because God knows what is best for us. We need to exercise patience, because patience is also a form of action.

We also see how Prophet Elisha became an instrument to effect the conversion in the heart of Namaan. We see Namaan receiving the healing grace as well as the saving grace. We as missionaries, sent to become an effective instrument to bring many people to the Lord and thus to the fount of salvation.

In the gospel passage we see how the ten lepers received the healing grace but only one could transform it to be the saving grace as Jesus told him "your faith has saved you."

Though the Jews would not have any association with gentiles, we see here Jews and Samaritan stay together in the time of their struggle. During the stragglng moments there is no difference between caste creed and all kinds of barriers. We have even recently witnessed the terrible flood struck in Kerala which brought together the sentiments and emotions of all caste and religions. In a similar way these Jews and Samaritan staying together in their great desperation, meet Jesus the saviour and they shout, "Jesus, Master have mercy on us." They became one as their need was one and the same – to be healed. In a similar way, when we are with one and the same goal of marching towards our Creator, the difference between caste creed and religion should not separate us, and our relationship with one another.

Here Jesus understands the predicament of the lepers, accept their plea and heals them. A few years ago Guinea and Sierra Leone, neighbouring countries of Ghana struck with a dangerous disease called Ebola. To prevent the disease from entering to Ghana, all were instructed to be very careful and practice several precautionary measures. Even during the Holy Mass, the exchange of peace with a handshake (normal custom) was prohibited. Even there were several rules from the government to ensure safety. But one Ghanian elderly priest was not bothered about any of these safety measures. He was freely moving around meeting and being with

everyone in his ministry. Once asked if he was not afraid of the disease, he smiled and said, "The world is suffering not with the disease in the body but with the heart. If we fear and keep the people away, it can kill the relationship. Anyway one day we all will die but before that I don't want to kill the relationship with the people. So I don't fear." He was well aware to accept everyone knowing the needs of everyone.

It was so unfortunate to see all the 9 who were Jews could not feel the need to thank the Lord. But the Samaritan was exceptional and returned himself to pour out his heart before the Lord. Always gratitude is the common attitude that we seldom practise, or receive from others. In our lives we come across with many people without whom we would not have reached where we are now: our parents, brothers, sisters, teachers, friends etc. But we take everything for granted and never thank them. In a similar way we never express our gratitude to the abundance of blessings we receive every day from God our loving Father. Let this Divine Liturgy open our inner eyes to see the miracles n blessings that Lord showers upon our lives so that we can have a grateful hearts to the Lord Almighty. Amen.

*Published by*

CMI General Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry