

The Twenty Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
Luke 17:12-19

And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole. (KJV)

The Lord God heals us everyday in ways we do not even perceive. We are the beneficiaries of prayers of others we will never know. Each day merits our giving unending thanks to God for healing us.

Holy Confession heals us. Receiving the Precious Body and Blood of Christ heals us. Holy Unction and other prayers have a healing effect on us. God deserves to have our gratitude.

We are healed when we repent of our sins and God receives us with love. We are healed when we are forgiven offenses towards God and our neighbor. The present Gospel makes clear Jesus recognizes acts of gratitude.

These are busy times for believers. Too often God is forgotten. Too often God is turned to in prayer with requests. God is not always thanked when the prayers are answered.

The Church prescribes the present Gospel reading each year. The present Gospel reading verifies Jesus' healing power. The same Gospel underscores the importance of being grateful for healing.

We travel through the world safely very often. God deserves gratitude for our safe travels. God's healing love keeps us healthy. We should thank God at all times for the love that heals.

The hunger in the soul requires nourishment. Without Divine nourishment, we would suffer severe ailments of diverse kinds. Thanking God for Divine nourishment is a Christian responsibility.

Our patron saints and guardian angels protect us in various ways. Patron saints and guardian angels are due believers' gratitude. Responsible Christians make it a practice to regularly thank God for blessings received.

God's Holy Church is an endless blessing. Believers demonstrate gratitude to the Church by honoring the Church's teachings and values. Appreciation to the Church is evident by the effort put forth by faithful parishioners.

Christians have a responsibility to invest in the life in Christ taken up at Holy Baptism. Growth in Christ is expected throughout life while the mind functions well.

The world and Satan seek to take the Christian away from Christ. Vigilance is necessary at all times. Vigilance is strengthened through prayer, fasting and being nourished in God's Holy Church.

There is a saying "We are what we eat." We should first and always receive the Precious Body and Blood of Christ to be united with Christ. The Holy Scriptures offer Divine nourishment for the soul and daily life.

The lives of the saints and martyrs and writings of the Holy Fathers and Mothers of the Church feed the hunger of the soul. The Divine services of the Church address the appetite of the soul.

To be healthy Christians, living according to the way and teachings of Jesus Christ is essential. The Nativity Fast calls believers to be more faithful to the way of Jesus Christ.

Now is the time to fully consider the meaning of Jesus Christ taking on human flesh. Now is the time to assess the condition of the soul and the need to repent.

Jesus Christ heals believers today as the lepers were healed in the current Gospel. We are blessed to have the opportunity to turn to Jesus Christ for healing. We express the joy of being healed when we thank Jesus Christ.

God's Holy Church helps us to become healthy and to remain healthy. Health of soul is of paramount importance. We learn how to make the soul healthy in God's Holy Church.

Each Divine service of the Church is instructive. Attentive believers are conscious of the content of the Divine services. Believers are expected to improve in health of soul with each participation in the Divine services.

The time each person is given is a gift from God. The way the person uses the time will determine how the person experiences eternity. Time given by God is to be used wisely and invested in the Kingdom of God.

We invest in the Kingdom of God in our relationship with Jesus Christ and with each other. The Nativity Fast is the time to work conscientiously on our relationship with Jesus Christ and each other.

The Nativity Fast is the time to do what is necessary to grow in Christ and to be more firmly united with Christ. The Divine service of God's Holy Church strengthens our relationship with Christ and each other.

When we are away from the Church services, we continue to have the opportunity to be united with Christ in prayer and in action. Keeping the mind, heart and soul centered in Christ keeps the unity with Christ strong.

The Twenty Eighth Sunday after Pentecost. St. Ambrose, Venerable Gregory of Gornjak the Hesychast. Serbian Children's Day. December 7/20, 2020. St. Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church, Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic