

## Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Nov 15th 2017

Today's first reading from Wisdom is an exhortation to those in positions of power and authority in the Mediterranean world a century before Christ. We may use different words or expressions today, but the same pleas arise from our minds and hearts as we pray for those in power positions around the world. "Seek Divine Wisdom! Guide us in ways that provide food, shelter, dignity and life for all people! Lead us to peace, not war!" It would be easy to stop there. If only "they" would do something different, make better decisions for our city, our country, our world.

But what about us - do we desire God's words; do we long for them and trust that we will be instructed? Often enough I seek Divine Wisdom - but then don't wait for a response or just do what I was going to do anyway. Or I long to see how God is acting in our world, but then don't pause long enough to see it! I miss praying in gratitude for the many ways that God is acting in and through people, a course of events, and all of creation! How much easier to focus on what isn't, instead of what is.

Like the ten lepers in Luke's gospel for today, we ask for what we deeply long for, but are we grateful for the great gifts given us each day in response to our needs and desires and longings? In most narratives of Jesus' healings, he is responding to a heartfelt desire and longing - remember the widow who pleads on behalf of her son, the Centurion for his slave, Jairus for his daughter; or the paralytic man at the pool and the man in Gerasene pleading on their own behalf. Sometimes it is a nonverbal plea, as with the woman with a hemorrhage who reaches to touch. Jesus asks nothing of them, he responds to their deep longing for life and wholeness.

The writer of the gospel may have placed this healing story in this chapter rather than earlier in the gospel with other healing stories because here Jesus is more urgently talking about Kingdom of God - "the Kingdom of God is among you," he says in the next verses. The writer makes a point to say that of all the ten lepers who were healed, only one, a Samaritan - an outsider and a foreigner - returns to give thanks. Even he "gets it"!

How are our needs and longings being filled right now? How is God answering my prayers today?

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