

Homily for the 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 12-13, 2019

Readings: 2 Kings 5:14-17; 2 Timothy 2:8-13; Luke 17: 11-19

Preacher: Kathi Piehler

When my husband and I were raising our children some of the first words we taught them were: “Please, Thank you and Excuse Me.”

To our delight, our children continue that tradition. The amazing thing is that “Please, Thank You and Excuse Me” aren’t always said today.

And it seems that saying thank you was a problem for people in the time of Christ, as well.

Today’s Gospel offers us the miracle of the ten lepers who were cured and yet only one comes back to say, “Thank You” to the Lord. Only one of the lepers had an “Attitude of Gratitude.”

This parable reminds me of the blessings, the miracles—great and small—in my own life that I should be thanking the Good Lord for, because God is the ultimate grantor of all those blessings.

Yes, this is a parable of *thanksgiving*. The “thanks” part is easy to understand but what about the “giving” part? I wonder if the “giving” is really a type of “Paying It Forward.”

When the Samaritan leper realized he had been cured he came back to Jesus, fell at His feet and thanked Him, I’d like to think that there was a “rest of the story” to this parable. I’d like to think that when Jesus told the Samaritan: “Stand up and go, your Faith has saved you” that the “go” was more than just sending him on his way, rather it was an admonition to “go Pay It Forward.” Similar to the words of the poet, Maya Angelou, “When you get, give.” As a reflection of his Attitude of Gratitude, I’d like to think that the former leper went back to his village in Samaria, despite some risk to himself, to spread the Good News that Jesus is healer, that Jesus is the Savior.

There are people all around us who have recognized the blessings that the Lord has bestowed on them and they, too, have that Attitude of Gratitude and therefore Pay It Forward.

It's easy to recognize it in the generosity of people like Tom who donates to our community for the benefit of all. Or those like Marty and Darci who quietly, support Catholic Family Center with their many services to the poor.

But lest we think that this "Attitude of Gratitude" is somehow only tied to the financial, there is John who recently died, unexpectedly, while "Paying It Forward."

John was in a Retreat with the poor in Booneville, Kentucky, when he died. Booneville is in the second poorest county in the United States; the Catholic parish there, staffed by two Franciscan Sisters, is where 20 men go each year to work with the poor rehabbing their homes and praying together. John had gone to work in Booneville many times. He had that "Attitude of Gratitude."

John's funeral Mass was standing room only – filled with people who knew John from different walks of life—former math students, little guys whose team he coached and friends and neighbors. We each knew John from a different perspective and his son's words of remembrance assembled a mosaic of a man who truly understood the concept of Paying It Forward, be it as a volunteer for RAIHN working with the homeless, teaching Religious Ed classes, or tutoring kids in the inner city.

As his son said, "Dad was always full of gratitude, reminding us regularly that 'Above all, I am thankful. Dad thanked everyone he ever met from the mailman to the coffee shop owner.'"

Saying "Thank You" is the least we can do.

We've all heard the expression: "Attitude of Gratitude." How do we develop that attitude in our everyday lives?

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- "When you learn, teach. When you get, give." — Maya Angelou. ...
- "If you can't **pay** it back, **pay it forward**." — Catherine Ryan Hyde. "Life engenders life. ...

Gratitude means thanks and appreciation. ... **Gratitude**, which rhymes with "**attitude**," comes from the Latin word *gratus*, which **means** "thankful, pleasing." When you feel **gratitude**, you're pleased by what someone **did** for you and also

pleased by the results. Unlike indebtedness, you're not anxious about having to pay it back.