

November 26, 2020
Thanksgiving Day
Sir 50:22-24
Ps 145:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-11
1 Cor 1:3-9
Lk 17:11-19

THANKFUL? GRATEFUL?

Two weeks ago, there was a strong typhoon that hit the Philippines. My home province and the neighboring provinces were devastated by heavy flooding. A lot of houses and rice fields were submerged in water. Lives were lost. Properties were damaged. Sufferings were very evident.

While I was monitoring the situation back home, I saw in a television news an interview on one of the victims of the flooding. She was saying that she had lost everything – house, crops, and money. She admitted that she does not know how to begin again. And then she added, **“I know that my family is suffering right now but we are still thankful because we are alive. I believe that God will help us.”** Hearing what she uttered I said to myself: **“Wow! That person is full of hope and her heart was bursting with gratitude in the midst of suffering.”**

The flooding did not wash away the pandemic. The virus is still a threat. The difficulties that these people are experiencing are now doubled. Nonetheless, they are still grateful for being alive. They remain hopeful in spite of the situation.

Like them, this pandemic has brought us a lot of sufferings. We are being tested in all aspects of life – physical, psychological, and spiritual. At times, the pressure is too much that we start to see the negative and fail to see the positive. We start to become pessimistic rather than optimistic. Thus, when we are so focus on the negative, we will surely fall flat in becoming grateful/thankful in the midst of trials/difficulties in life. We will fail in imitating the gratefulness of that flood victim that I shared with you.

In our 2nd reading proclaimed we heard St. Paul was giving thanks to God. He was grateful for the opportunity to minister to the people of Corinth. He was thankful even though he knew how hard/difficult it was to minister to them. In spite of the issues of division, moral disorder, idol worship to name a few, St. Paul’s heart was bursting with gratitude to God for the chance to enlighten the people by proclaiming to them the Gospel. He was grateful in the midst of a difficult situation. In his letter to the Thessalonians, St. Paul says: **“In all circumstances, give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”** (1 Thes 5:18)

In our gospel proclaimed we heard the healing miracle done by Jesus to the ten (10) lepers. In the midst of sufferings of the ten (10) people, Jesus was there to bring them relief. He was there to make them whole again. He was there to liberate and heal them from their illness. He gave them the gift of healing. Naturally, when a person receives a gift, the response must be of

thanksgiving. Unfortunately, only one responded and he was a Samaritan. The rest were quick to forget Jesus, the giver of the gift.

I remember the stories of **Andrew Carnegie** and **Samuel Leibowitz**.

- **Andrew Carnegie**, a multimillionaire, left one million dollars to one of his relatives, who in return cursed Carnegie bitterly because he had left \$365 million to public charities and had cut the relatives off with one million each.
- **Samuel Leibowitz**, a criminal lawyer and judge, saved 78 men from the electric chair. Not one of them ever bothered to thank him.

They helped others and it was returned with ingratitude. The same thing happened to Jesus, when the nine (9) people he healed, did not return to give thanks to him.

We are celebrating **Thanksgiving Day** today. In the midst of sufferings brought to us by this pandemic, **do we still have reasons to be grateful for? Do we still see blessings amidst the chaos around us? Is our heart bursting with gratitude to God every day?**

I would like to invite you all to pause for a moment. Count your blessings rather than your troubles. After counting your blessings, say: **"Thank you, Lord!"**

Let me end up my homily by sharing with you a prayer. Let this prayer be your prayer too.

Thanksgiving Day Prayer

Oh, Heavenly Father,

We thank You for food and remember the hungry.

We thank You for health and remember the sick.

We thank You for friends and remember the friendless.

We thank You for freedom and remember the enslaved.

May these remembrances stir us to service,

that Your gifts to us may be used for others. Amen

(<http://frtonyshomilies.com/>)

HAPPY THANKSGIVING DAY TO ALL OF YOU! GOD BLESS!