

Readings for the 13th Sunday after Pentecost

Ave Maria Catholic Church – Extraordinary Form

Galatians 3:16-22

Brethren, the promises were made to Abraham and to his descendant. It does not say, “And to descendants,” as referring to many, but as referring to one, “And to your descendant,” who is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to cancel the promise. For if the inheritance comes from the law, it is no longer from a promise; but God bestowed it on Abraham through a promise. Why, then, the law? It was added for transgressions, until the descendant came to whom the promise had been made; it was promulgated by angels at the hand of a mediator. Now there is no mediator when only one party is involved, and God is one. Is the law then opposed to the promises [of God]? Of course not! For if a law had been given that could bring life, then righteousness would in reality come from the law. But scripture confined all things under the power of sin, that through faith in Jesus Christ the promise might be given to those who believe.

Luke 17: 11-19

At that time, as Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. As he was entering a village, ten lepers met [him]. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voice, saying, “Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!” And when he saw them, he said, “Go show yourselves to the priests.” As they were going they were cleansed. And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, “Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?” Then he said to him, “Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.”

Gratitude

13th Sunday after Pentecost (TLM) – Luke 17:11-19
Ave Maria Catholic Church, August 27, 2023 - Fr. David M Vidal

Memory is one of the many gifts that God has given us human beings. The memory of the past allows us to grow. We build our lives on the foundation of history and tradition. The great achievements of the present are built on the knowledge and memory of the achievements and failures of the past. Then, we learn that in order to advance, we must first remember.

This is a fundamental principle of the spiritual life of God's chosen people, the Israelites. If we go back to the book of Deuteronomy, we read how the greatest commandment is given to them. *Shema Israel*, listen and remember!

The people of Israel must listen and remember that “*The LORD is our God, the LORD alone! Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today. Keep repeating them to your children. Recite them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them on your arm as a sign and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.*” (Det 6: 4-9).

We must not only listen, but we must also remember. The lack of memory is one of the most terrible and confusing losses of our modern society. Unfortunately, sometimes, this loss of memory is intended and desired.

Have we not witnessed how not long ago some people tried to destroy the images of the past? Have we not seen how some people intended to burn our history? We must remember our history with its glories and its failures.

Memory allows us to recognize our faults and to humble ourselves because of them. We must remember our failures. To erase those images of the past that we do not like is not an option. That would be to deny ourselves, to deny what we have been and experienced. We must remember those failures and faults to redeem the past, change, and be converted.

Now, memory is also absolutely necessary to understand our achievements. How often do we enjoy goods and gifts in the present, but we forget from where they come? We take them for granted. And by taking them for granted, we forget that they are gifts, that we have received them, and that someone else has given them to us!

Like the Israelites, we must listen and remember. What must we listen to? We must listen to that interior voice that calls us to reflect on the past. We must perform a small exercise, asking ourselves, in the silence of our hearts, how many beautiful things God has done for

us. The world and everything it contains are God's gift to us! How generous is our Heavenly Father! Nevertheless, that is not enough. In his generosity, God not only wants to give us the world and everything it contains, but even heaven itself!

And yet, how easily and how quickly we forget! This is what we learn from the gospel of this Sunday's liturgy.

In their misery, the ten lepers were crying for healing. They wanted to be cleansed from the impurity of leprosy and be reinserted in social life. They were experiencing death in their flesh and separation from families, friends, and the rest of society. They were walking dead people.

Then, the Lord enters. Jesus was moving along on his journey, the journey towards Jerusalem, the place in which he was going to offer his life for us, the place in which he was going to give us his blood to cleanse us from our sins.

And the Lord stands before the lepers and, with authority, commands them to go and show themselves to the priests, anticipating the reality of the miracle. And the miracle takes place!

However, here comes the lesson. Only one remembered that the healing was a gift for which he had to be grateful. For us, that is the lesson we must remember. We must not be ungrateful. We must exercise our memories. Let us remember the great things God has done for us!

First, let us remember the natural gifts that we have received. All the gifts of creation! The place and time we were born, the family in which we were received, and the people who raised us, educated us, and nurtured our lives.

Let us meditate on the natural gifts we have received. God has given us hands to help us work, an intellect to understand, a heart to love, and a memory to remember that all these things are his gifts for our use, for our good, and for the good of many other people. These are God's gifts, and they must be used for God's glory.

Second, remember the supernatural gifts we have received. In Jesus, God has saved us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of light. This is a kingdom of truth, goodness, and purity that truly makes our lives beautiful! We were purchased for God, which means that Christ paid with his death the high price of redemption.

We must remember the great works of our Lord: Bethlehem and his birth, Calvary and his death, and the Altar and his continual offering for our salvation. This is the story of the love of God for us, and we must remember it as we do when we participate in the memorial of the Sacrifice of the Cross: Holy Mass.

We must also remember the gift of his Mother and her maternal protection throughout our lives, the gift of the Church, and the gift of all the saints, apostles, martyrs, missionaries, doctors, and virgins. Holy people of all ages and of all times. How many good examples to admire and follow!

What is our answer to those memories? Nobody said it better than St John Paul II in his Letter at the beginning of the New Millennium: *“Remember the past with gratitude ... live the present with enthusiasm and ... look forward to the future with confidence,”* (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 1).

We must remember and be grateful. And our gratitude must be shown in actions rather than in words. Let us ask the Lord for the grace to be thankful by remembering the past with gratitude, doing what is good in the present with enthusiasm, and looking forward to the future with hope. Amen.