

Sermon on Sunday, 19th January by His Eminence Metropolitan of Zimbabwe Seraphim Kykkotis



This Sunday's gospel extract (Luke 17, 12-19) refers to the miracle of the cure of the ten lepers, which Jesus Christ offered to ten unfortunate suffering people who were expecting to die at any moment. We must bear in mind, that in the first century to which the incident refers – the bloodstained area today's Palestine and Israel – leprosy was one of the incurable diseases.

According to the ethical responsibility to which society was sensitised, it either looked after its lepers or it abandoned them to die on their own in the misery of their leprosy. During other eras and in other regions, like in Jesus Christ's era, everyone abandoned the lepers. A bell would even be tied around their necks like those that shepherds tie around the necks of their goats so that when they get lost they can find them – so that if it happened that someone was passing near a leper he could avoid him in order that he not contract the deadly disease of leprosy.

We see Christ – in contrast to the fears of the healthy people who would chase

them away swearing at and hitting them – receiving them with love and kindness as if they were his most loved people, his own children, his own parents, his own siblings. And indeed, precisely because Jesus Christ is always the All-Loving God, he accepts everybody with the same love and kindness, offering himself to us as the Only True Saviour of our life, our salvation.

But again, the reaction of the lepers who have benefited surprises us – for only one of the ten considered that he could inquire about his benefactor so that he could thank him. Indeed, the one who returned to thank Jesus Christ was the one who was considered by the local Community as the immoral one, the sinner who denied his Nationality and the religion of his forefathers, a Samaritan according to the Jews.

However, that which is of great importance to us is not so much the ungratefulness of the nine, as much as the observation of Christ towards the cured leper- that which saved him from his leprosy was his deep faith in God.

Perhaps this greatness of the cured leper's faith was that he convinced the other nine ungrateful lepers to turn towards Christ and to ask for their cure, which finally they succeeded in doing. It seems therefore, that the virtues of one contribute towards the salvation of the broader social whole.

Our Lord Jesus Christ stressed clearly to the cured and privileged leper of today's Gospel extract: "your faith has saved you".

This steadfast faith of the leper is what we need today in order to live the miracle, not only of any incurable disease, but also the miracle of prevailing safety measures for the peaceful existence of all, the miracle of peaceful existence in the whole world, the miracle of the ceasing of all wars, the miracle of the feeding of our hungry people and especially of young children, the miracle of the availability of water to millions of people, who still do not have this resource, the annihilation of the problem of poverty, the solution of the problem of refugees and immigrants and the keeping of God's justice within the world that we live in.

Only with our obedience to the Divine Commandments of Christ and with our deep faith in His Godly presence, can we hope for a better world that will disclose our path for us for our worthy participation in the Kingdom of Heaven.

— Source: [Greek Orthodox Archbishopric of Zimbabwe / Facebook](#)