

## Reflection for the 28<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time

*A miracle can be defined as a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency.*

Today our First Reading and Gospel Reading provide us with miracles for us to reflect on and ponder what message these miracles provide us with. In our First Reading taken from the Second Book of Kings we hear of the miracle that the Prophet Elisha performs on Naaman the Syrian who is washed clean of leprosy by following the direction of the Prophet Elisha, washing 7 times in the river Jordan. This miracle is one of 16 miracles that is found in the Old Testament that are attributed to the Prophet Elisha. Naaman is so moved by the miracle that he becomes a follower of the one true God. In our Gospel reading this Sunday taken from the Gospel of Luke, we hear of Jesus healing ten lepers by telling them to “*go and show yourselves to the priests.*” On realizing he was cured, one of the ten, a Samaritan, returned to Jesus and thanked Him. This miracle that Jesus performs today in our Gospel Reading is one of 29 miracles that are found in the Gospel of Luke and are attributed to Jesus Christ. The four Gospels list 37 distinct miracles performed by Jesus.

Both miracles, in the Second Book of Kings and in the Gospel of Luke show that a miracle is more than just an event that cannot be explained by science and is therefore attributed to God. These events affect the people that are a part of the miracle in such a profound way that they are never again the same. Naaman’s life is forever changed, the Samaritan is so moved by the miracle that he finds Jesus and falls at His feet. These two men allow the impossible that became possible to affect them in such a way that from the moment of the miracle they were no longer the same, they were forever changed. The miracles that we have in our readings this Sunday would still be miracles even if Naaman and the Samaritan were not open to their lives being changed by the miracle.

On my recent pilgrimage to France and Italy, one of the places we visited was the town of Lancia, Italy, which is the site of the first recorded Eucharistic Miracle. Tradition holds that sometime in the year 750 a Basilian Monk was celebrating Mass at the Monastery of St. Longinus. The Priest was having doubts about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. At the words of consecration, the Monk saw the bread change into living flesh and the wine change into blood. To this day people come from all over the world to witness this miracle. Currently the Eucharistic Miracle of Lancia is housed in a silver and glass reliquary made in Naples in 1713 and is found in the Church on St. Francis in Lancia. The Eucharistic Miracle of Lancia is the first of the 153 Vatican-approved Eucharistic Miracles. The town of Lancia is a beautiful town to explore. I will have to admit the weather was great when we got there, but I spent most of my time in the Church of St. Francis where the Eucharistic Miracle is housed. It is hard to describe the impact that this Miracle can have on someone who encounters it. I am sure this can be said when anyone encounters a Miracle.

Today in our First Reading and Gospel Reading we hear of two people that are profoundly affected by the Miracle they experience, Naaman in the Second Book of Kings and the Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke are forever changed by the Miracle that they experience. Regarding the Basilian Monk who experienced the Eucharistic Miracle in Lancia, Italy in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, we do not even know what impact this Eucharistic Miracle had on his life. When the impossible is made possible I would hope that we would all be instantly affected by the miracle in our midst. I would also hope that the miracles that have happened in the past continue to have an impact on the present. From what has been shared with me by the other Pilgrims that journeyed with me to Lancia, this first Eucharistic Miracle dating from the 8<sup>th</sup> century is continuing to have an impact on the world to this day. Of course, we do not have to turn to the Bible to find Miracles, nor do we have to travel to Lancia, Italy. Every time we gather for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we experience a Eucharistic Miracle, the bread and wine becoming the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. My prayer for each one of you is that every Miracle that has taken place in this world from the moment God the Creator spoke the world into existence will always have an impact on your daily life.