

Flourish in Faith *Stewardship Narrative Series*

Proper 23 - Luke 17:11-19

Sunday, October 13, 2013

Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.



“**P**rimero Dios!” is a phrase frequently heard in Latino ministry. It is loosely translated into English as “First of all, there is God!” signifying an awareness that God is within us and can be trusted to provide for our personal wellbeing, our families and children, our livelihood and future. Our relationship with God is one of gratitude for all these blessings, from the basic necessities – housing, food, medical care and education – to the opportunities for a brighter future benefitting our children and, in turn, our communities.

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor opens her recently published memoir, *My Beloved World*, with her diagnosis of juvenile diabetes at the age of seven, describing how she learned to inject her daily dose of insulin. Justice Sotomayor writes of her large, loving extended family – her abuelita (grandmother), parents, brother, aunts, uncles and cousins. She talks of her family’s journey from Puerto

Rico and their struggles to survive and flourish in New York, surrounded by gangs, alcoholism and drugs. She speaks of venturing out of her familiar world, first to Princeton then Yale Law School. Justice Sotomayor felt very much a foreigner in an alien land. Yet she understood the wonderful opportunities offered to her, welcomed the collegiality and helpfulness of those she encountered along the way and experienced the love and support of her family. Justice Sotomayor speaks movingly of the gratitude she feels for all whom God placed in her path to love, support and mentor her. She learned that healing and gratitude go hand in hand.

Do we put God first in all the circumstances of our lives? Can we see that offering praise to God, no matter what, deepens our faith? Can we see that praising God makes us well? In today’s Gospel, Jesus encounters ten lepers in a village in the region between Samaria and Galilee. All ten lepers called out for mercy, having heard of His healing ministry. Jesus’ love and mercy – the healing of the leprosy – was freely given to all. Yet only one, the foreigner, the Samaritan, returned to praise Jesus for the gift of his healing. The other nine may have been made clean, but through the act of praise, the Samaritan was healed.

It is easy to take so many things for granted in this life: our family, friends, health, even our faith. The Samaritan Leper shows us that expressing gratitude makes us well. Jesus’ love and mercy continue to sustain us as we live our faith in an ever changing, diverse society and world. None of us are “foreigners” to Jesus’ love and compassion. We share His love and compassion in relationship with others through service and stewardship to the Church, the Body of Christ, proudly proclaiming “Primero Dios!”



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Reflection Questions

- Is expressing gratitude a measure of health?
- What are some of the concrete ways you express gratitude?
- Is praising God good for our health?