

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Saint Francis de Sales offers a vivid metaphor that reflects the experience of family members impacted by a loved one's addiction:

"So long as fruits are undamaged they may be preserved, some in straw, some in sand, and some in their own leaves; but when they are once bruised, it is almost impossible to keep them but with honey and sugar in conserves: in like manner purity which has never been wounded or violated can be kept in many ways, but when it has once been impaired, nothing can conserve it but an excellent devotion, which, as I have often said, is the true spiritual honey and sugar" (*Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part III, Chapter 12).

For families, our "bruising" comes through broken trust, deep worry, and cycles of control or enabling. No matter how hard we tried to hold everything together, the disease of addiction left its mark. As Saint Francis explains, only devotion to God—the "honey and sugar" of faith, prayer, and fellowship—can preserve and sweeten what has been wounded.

Recovery literature echoes this reality: once our peace is compromised, sheer willpower cannot restore serenity. We need a spiritual solution greater than ourselves.

This Sunday's first reading captures this need through the story of Naaman, who obeyed the prophet's word and was healed (2 Kings 5:14–15):

*Naaman went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times
at the word of Elisha, the man of God.
His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child,
and he was clean of his leprosy.
Naaman returned with his whole retinue to the man of God.
On his arrival he stood before Elisha and said,
"Now I know that there is no God in all the earth,
except in Israel.
Please accept a gift from your servant."*

Naaman's cleansing foreshadows baptism—our own call to surrender and be renewed. Like him, we resist at first, thinking we can manage things our way. But true healing comes only when we plunge into God's mercy.

As family members, we often learn this through repeated disappointment. Some of us need only a few painful lessons to surrender our will to God. Others are “mangled” by years of anxiety and resentment before recognizing that serenity is found in His care alone.

In this Sunday’s Gospel, Jesus heals ten lepers, but only one returns to give thanks (Luke 17:11–19). Gratitude marks the difference between momentary relief and lasting transformation.

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.”

For us, gratitude is the honey that preserves our recovery. We remain healed when we keep returning to God with thanksgiving, share our hope with others, and live devoted to His will instead of our own.

Reflection Questions

- In what ways have you experienced “bruising” from your loved one’s addiction, and how has devotion to God brought healing?
- How does Naaman’s act of surrender encourage you to trust God’s process rather than your own plans?
- What practices help you return to God with gratitude like the healed Samaritan?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: 2 Kings 5:14-17

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4

Second Reading: 2 Timothy 2:8-13

Gospel: Luke 17:11-19