

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany, Year B

2 Kings 5:1-14

Psalm 30

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Mark 1:40-45



Healing is a Team Effort

One of the key attributes of the Kingdom of God is that everything is somehow connected to everything else. This includes not just the spiritual aspects of the Kingdom, but the physical, natural world as well. It's like a 3-D matrix! Therefore, everything we think, do, or say, has repercussions somewhere else, sometimes through time.

Life is designed so that to get things done we need more than one person's involvement. That's why "independence" is really an illusion. Individuality is an illusion. Separation is an illusion. We need other people, and we need God.

Take for example, the case of Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, as described in 2 Kings. This man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. He was eventually cured of this disease, but it's interesting to see how many people were involved to make it happen.

It began with a young Israeli girl who had been taken captive by the Arameans. As a servant to Naaman's wife, she knew that Naaman had leprosy, but she also knew that Elisha the prophet could help Naaman. She began Naaman's healing process by telling her mistress about Elisha the prophet. Did the Israeli girl cure Naaman? No, but without her simple act of service, it may have never happened. She used her current situation in life to do some good.

Naaman's wife was the next player in the process. She must have brought the message to Naaman, for it was recorded that Naaman went to the king to report what the Israeli girl had said. Did Naaman's wife cure Naaman? No, but she played a part in the process.

The king of Aram was next to contribute to the healing of Naaman. He wrote a letter of introduction for Naaman and arranged for silver, gold and garments to be used as payment for services rendered. A number of chariots, horses and assistants were included in the entourage to make this all happen. Who made the chariots? Who drove them? Who contributed the gold and silver, and who made the garments? Who made the roads so that the journey could happen? The number of players in the healing keeps growing and growing.

The king of Israel then sent Naaman to Elisha the prophet. The king served the healing process by redirecting Naaman to the proper person and place, knowing that it wasn't he, the king, who

could bring about the healing. When Naaman reached Elisha's house, Elisha sent a messenger, yet another player in the saga, with instructions on what Naaman should do to be healed, "Go, wash in the Jordan River seven times, and your flesh will be restored and you shall be clean."

Naaman, being a man of stature and importance, expected more than just being given instructions from a messenger. His ego got the better of him at this point, so he left without obeying the messenger. Naaman's servants, however, intervened and convinced him to do what the messenger had asked. They, too, now played a role in his healing. So Naaman did what he was told, and was eventually healed. (But it was the living waters of the Jordan River, through God, that ultimately did the healing – not Elisha himself!)

Often, to get things done, it takes the persistence of many people working together for the common good. It's designed this way so that people learn to work together and realize that there is great power in *interdependence*, and that we are all part of the same human family.

Healing is a team effort. Sometimes we may feel that the little things we do are worthless, and don't have any effect or do any good. But Naaman's healing (which ended to be both physical *and* spiritual), may not have happened without the little acts of numerous people along the way.

Who has helped you to heal? How about offering a prayer of thanks to them every once in a while?

In what little ways have you helped someone else to heal?

Blessing to all, Br. Daniel-Joseph, CG