

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Nov 13th 2013

Today's Gospel reading is short and to the point; it is also one of the more easily remembered healing narratives.

It is the story of the 10 lepers who call out to Jesus from a distance, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" Only one of the lepers returns to Jesus and thanks him as they are healed on their way to the temple.

Who doesn't remember reading it or hearing it as a youth and taking away the message to always thank God for what he has done for you—to remember to thank God when you receive an answer to prayer.

I remember always thinking, "Who wouldn't go back and thank the one who had done this marvelous healing for you?" And, "How could the nine others have been so thoughtless?"

But I find that as my life has gotten more complicated and cluttered, I too can be guilty of praying—begging—for something and then not immediately thanking God when a favorable response comes. Initial relief or happiness are sometimes followed by "business as usual" until I remember that I had Divine help.

I think often as "self-sufficient adults" we sometimes are so used to trying and pretending to be in control that we fool ourselves into really thinking we are. Instead of becoming like little children, as Jesus admonishes us to, we try to be the masters of our fate and only send up furtive pleas when we are at our wit's end. Then when we are "saved," our first thought is, "Whew!" and then we're on to the next crisis.

I pray that I will be more like the Samaritan, who although he was not even one of Jesus' countrymen, was open and present to the moment and not consumed by his plight or his task at hand to visit the priests in the temple. I need to stop, to notice, to reflect, to appreciate and to thank the One who loves me with an infinite love. For that matter, I also need to thank God when answers to prayer are not what I wanted, and trust that they are for the best.

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