

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Nov 26th 2015

The word "thanks" is mentioned more than once in today's readings. Certainly these are appropriate for Thanksgiving Day. Today's holiday has meant more to me as the years have passed. It has become somewhat a forgotten and unappreciated holiday. A gratifying reprieve that takes place between Halloween and the materialistic assault of the Christmas season. At least for a day, family, God, prayer, breaking bread and giving thanks are at the center of activity in most homes. Later tonight we will be invaded with overwhelming consumerism topped off with images of luxury vehicles wrapped in bows. But for today I need to remember that there is much for me to be thankful for: an intact family, good health, gainful employment, being part of a vibrant faith community and many other blessings. Yet there is something lacking as I take account of my blessings. I ask myself the question what is the source of these unearned gifts? The answer of course is God. The next question is, am I conscientiously aware of this in my life on a daily basis? Today's readings help with the answer.

The psalm is a wonderful prayer proclaiming the greatness of God in all things, which near the end proclaims "let all your works give you thanks." The reading from 1 Corinthians gives thanks for God's grace and the spiritual gifts that have flowed to us through Jesus Christ. The Gospel reading struck me in a different way. In the reading only one of the ten lepers that were cleansed came back and thanked Jesus and gave praise to God. Interestingly he was a Samaritan. The Gospel reading is a foreshadowing of the salvation of all mankind, which we received by the atonement of Christ through his death and resurrection. The Gospel reading invites me to re-think how, at times, I take my gifts for granted. I need to reflect upon that in my own life and ponder if I am one of the nine lepers who took their healing for granted or am I like the one who is thankful. It's good to be reminded God is responsible for all the gifts I receive. The most important of these gifts is God's grace and eternal salvation. So today at the conclusion of Mass, as happens every year, I'll once again sing the words of one of my favorite hymns, "Praise God from Whom All Blessing Flow."

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