

28TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME – YEAR C

Scripture doesn't tell us why nine of the ten men healed of leprosy failed to give thanks, but it is clear from Jesus' response, that giving thanks was the proper response for what God had done for them.

Why did Jesus place such emphasis on giving thanks? Is he simply rankled by their lack of good manners? The answer, I would argue, goes much deeper than this.

To give thanks requires that one recognises and acknowledges that someone has been kind to them. That someone has done some good deed for them that they were not obliged to do. To do so requires humility on the part of the one who gives thanks.

In the spiritual life, such humility disposes one's heart and mind to recognise that all of God's blessings are freely given and cannot be earned. God's blessings are pure gift. In this way, giving thanks properly aligns one's life to God because it reminds us that we approach God with empty hands. We have nothing to trade with God in return for his blessings. We are totally reliant on his grace, which is a truly humbling realisation.

"He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way." (Psalm 25:9)

The Universal Catechism teaches that, *"To adore God is to acknowledge, in respect and absolute submission, the 'nothingness of the creature' who would not exist but for God. To adore God is to praise and exalt him and to humble oneself, as Mary did in the Magnificat, confessing with gratitude that he has done great things and holy is his name. The worship of the one God sets man free from turning in on himself, from the slavery of sin and the idolatry of the world."* (CCC 2097)

For this reason, St. Paul teaches that, *“whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the LORD Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”* (Col 3:17) This is the path that leads to Salvation, *“For you save a humble people, but the haughty eyes you bring down.”* (Psalm 18:27)

This lack of humility is what is most concerning about the nine who did not give thanks. Their bodies may have been healed but their souls remained in danger of perishing. These nine lacked the disposition that would have enabled them to receive the true miracle of healing from Jesus, the forgiveness of their sins. It is for this reason that the Lord’s final words to the one man who gave thanks are so poignant, “... stand up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you.” (Luke 17:19)