



Boston Catholic Journal



NIHIL NISI IESUM

Dedicated to Mary, Mother of God

Salus Animarum Suprema Lex Esto (Canon Law 175)

The Salvation of Souls is the Supreme Law in the Church

Strangers to Gratitude: A Tale of Ten Lepers

“Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?” (Saint Luke 17:17-18)

We are familiar with the story. It can be summarized in a sentence: Jesus heals ten lepers and only one comes back to say, “*Thank You!*”

Deceptively simple, yes?

Very clearly, it is a story about *ingratitude*.

It is also, however, a story about *obsession*. We are so obsessed with the gift that we are forgetful of the Giver. We are overwhelmed with our good fortune and so utterly absorbed in it, obsessed with it, that we have forgotten not only the Giver — but our own genuine poverty apart from Him.

We do not see the Giver for the gift.

It is an odd permutation: the Giver is God. The gift is from God. And then the gift itself is deflected from God — becoming a good greater than God.

The problem is that the gift is, well ... *a gift*.

It is not ours.

It is His!

Our ingratitude is, sadly, quite common. What is uncommon is our obsession, our susceptibility to *utter self-absorption* — something that is both striking and revealing:

Our *capacity for happiness apart from God* is only revealed when we are **given** something — and our *unhappiness apart from God* when we are **deprived** of it.

And we are blind to both.

But take heart. Jesus also healed the blind ...

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