

28<sup>th</sup> Sunday 2016

Thank you! Thank You! How many times a day do you say those words? You probably can't count them. Sometimes they come automatically and other times they are more heartfelt, expressing real gratitude. But do you ever think about "thank" and wonder where it comes from? Well think again because "Thank" comes from "think". Thank/ Think. Like the German Danke/Denke. What Thank You means is "I'm thinking of you. Meaning. I'll remember what you did for me". It's more than just being polite, a courtesy. It's a way of saying, what you did for me is a Blessing! A Grace!

And of course if you speak Spanish or Italian, you say gracias or grazie. What you have done for me is a Blessing! A Grace! The Portuguese Obrigado is different. "obliged". In other words, I am bound to you for your kindness.

So Think you! Thank you! That's what our Gospel is about, an expression of gratitude on the part of the leper who is healed. (This gospel is often used at the Mass on Thanksgiving day). The most unlikely of the 10 lepers returns to Jesus to thank God and thank him for his healing. This Samaritan is a double outcast because of his leprosy and because he was a Samaritan, a foreigner. And yet he is the one whom Jesus singles out for praise. But do you wonder why the 9 lepers did not return? Maybe they didn't want to look back. Maybe they were so used to being outcasts that they didn't know who to say thank you. They had no attitude of gratitude. And really who can blame them?

Naaman the Syrian is also a "foreigner" but he too is grateful for his healing in the waters of the Jordan. In that story there is

the beautiful detail of his asking to bring back with him two mule loads of earth as a reminder of God's graciousness to him.

Saying Thank You means: I Remember! You are a blessing, a gift, a grace!

As I said, though, sometimes our "thanks" are just a courtesy. No big deal. But at other times it's a Wow! Thank You! The day after I saw the film Ignacio about the early life of St Ignatius where he becomes a beggar after his conversion, I was walking in the city and I felt compelled to give something to every person who was begging. I was thinking this could be St Ignatius. I gave a five dollar bill to one homeless person and he looked at me and said "wow", thank you. I guess he wasn't used to that.

Every Sunday we gather as a community for Eucharist which I think you know means "thanksgiving". That's the principle reason we are here today: not just to pray, or see friends, or receive communion.

We come together to "give thanks for the gifts God has given us"

That is why the Eucharistic Prayer that we pray together is so important. It is a dialog between presider and people who voice our shared "thanks and praise". Do you remember the former form of the dialog?

It is right to give God thanks and praise was the response.

The Eucharistic Prayer is meant to be the "WOW" of the liturgy. But there are so many "words" that it can be difficult to get the real sense of what we are praying: So here's a simple framework:

Praise for God's wonderful works

Asking the Holy Spirit to continue those wonderful works

(Epiklesis) as we

Remember

What do we remember? The events of Jesus' life, especially the night before he died/ his death, resurrection and promise to come again.

So we remember and we ask God to remember us

So that we can continue to give God "thanks and praise"