

Pastor's Column

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Where Are the Other Nine?

Whenever I begin feeling like it is time to throw myself a pity party, I go to the New Testament and read today's Gospel—Luke 17:11-19, the healing of the ten lepers.

All of us, from time to time, begin to feel weighed down with doubt, with a certain amount of despair, with feelings of being unwanted or under-appreciated.

We can find ourselves saying, "All that I have done for my family, for the Church, for my friends, for civic organizations, etc. and no one seems to notice. No one has offered a 'Thank You' for all that I have done. Why should I bother? Why should I continue in trying to do good? Why should I be making these sacrifices on behalf of the Gospel?"

The questions continue and the feelings of resentment build, and we find ourselves saying, "Woe is me!"

As Disciples of the Lord Jesus, we live the Gospel and we attempt to do the right things simply because they are the right things to do. Our sense of fulfillment should be in doing the right thing, not in getting recognition and reward for doing the right thing.

That was the point of last Sunday's Gospel as Jesus said to his Disciples (and to us), "So should it be with you. When you have done all you have been commanded, say 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do.'"

We have been given the gift of faith, and as we live out this faith in our daily lives in service to our brothers and sisters, we are giving thanks to God for this gift. The living out of our faith on a daily basis is about gratitude to God, not about looking for a reward!

When we are looking for rewards, we will always be disappointed. Yes, we are human beings. Being thanked, being recognized feels good when it happens. But we should not live the Gospel with that expectation. When it does happen, we should view it as "icing on the cake."

When we need to be reminded of that, we should reflect on today's Gospel. Jesus heals ten lepers, but only one returns to say "Thank you." Jesus received a 10% return for his good work!

If Jesus only received a 10% return, should we expect more? I doubt it!

May the Eucharist on which we feast this Sunday strengthen us to keep doing the right things, simply because they are the right things to do.

Let's not look for rewards and recognition, but when there is that 10% return, let's make sure that we praise God!

Fr. Mike