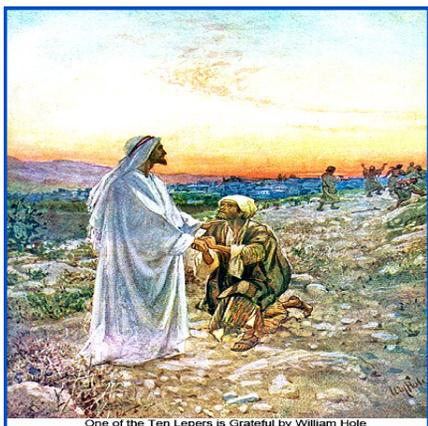


and become ten. One has no need of the rest to keep its unity. For this reason as the one who gave thanks is approved and praised as a sign of the One Church, so the nine who did not give thanks, now rejected, are shut out from the communion of this oneness. And so shall others like them remain imperfect in the number nine. And rightly does the Savior ask where are they; as though He knew them not. For, with God, to know is to choose; not to know, is to reject.

There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger.

As to the body, it is easy to see that a man may have no leprosy; and yet he may not be sound of soul. But in the light of this miracle, it troubles the mind to know how one who is thankless can be said to be *made clean*? But it is now easy to see, that this also can happen that someone within the society of the Church may know her true and pure doctrine, and may interpret it all in accord with the Catholic rule of faith; he may distinguish the creature from the creator, and by this show that he is free as it were from leprosy, from the spots of lies, and nevertheless be ungrateful to God and Lord Who made him clean, because uplifted in pride, he has not thrown himself down in loving humility to give thanks, and so has become like those of whom the Apostle said: *When they knew God, they have not glorified Him as God or given thanks* (Rom. i. 21). Saying, they knew God, Paul shows that they had been made clean of leprosy; yet he goes on to call them ungrateful.



And he said to him: Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole.

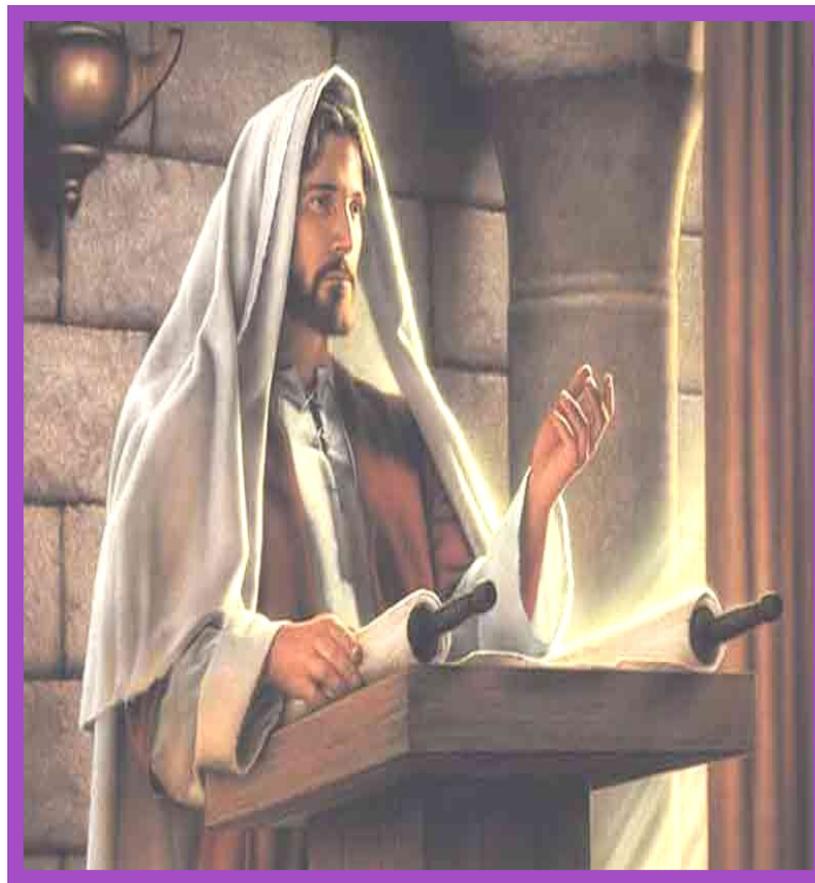
He who had fallen in humble devotion at the Lord's feet, is told to rise, and go on his way. For whoever is acutely aware of his own unworthiness, and humbles himself before God, is told by the comforting divine word, to rise, and to put his hand to *strong things* (Prov. xxxi. 19); and growing daily in merit, go on his way to *the more perfect things* (Heb. vi. 1). For if faith made him whole who had hurried back to give

thanks to his Savior and to the One Who had made him clean, unfaith has brought spiritual ruin to those who, receiving favors from God, fail to return and give Him glory.



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SERMON ON CONCERNING FAITH FROM THE FATHER'S OF THE CHURCH # 107 - 1



JESUS, OUR FIRST PREACHER!

13TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Based on the Divine Office-Douay-Rheims Version

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Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 17: 11-19

by: The Venerable Bede, Priest and Doctor

Whom when he saw, he said: Go, shew yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean.

We find that none of those to whom the Lord gave bodily favors were sent to the priests save lepers. For the priesthood of the Jews was a figure of the Royal Priesthood to come, which is in the Church, and in which all are consecrated who belong to the Body of Christ: the True and Supreme High Priest. And whosoever by the grace of God is without any trace of heretical falsity, or pagan superstition, or Jewish unfaith, or of even fraternal schism, let him, as free of diversity of color, come to the Church, and let him show the true color of the faith he has received. Other faults, such as those relating to the good health as it were of the members of the soul and of the senses, the Lord heals and corrects Himself, interiorly in the conscience and in the understanding.

And even Paul, after the Lord had said to him: *Why persecutes thou me, and I am Jesus whom thou persecutes*, was nevertheless sent to Ananias, to receive the sacrament of the doctrine of the faith from the priesthood which had been established in the Church, and so that his true color might be approved; not because the Lord could not do all this by Himself (for who other than He does these things even in the Church?), but so that the fellowship of all the faithful by approving one another, and by making each other sharers in the teaching of the true Faith may, in all that is said, and in all the sacraments by which they are sealed, present as it were the appearance of one true color.

Cornelius also, when by an angel that his alms were accepted and his prayers heard, nevertheless, for the sake of unity both of doctrine and of sacraments, is bidden to send to Peter; as though to him and to his had been said: *Go, shew yourselves to the priests*. For as they went, they were made clean. For when Peter had come to them, and although they had not yet received the sacrament of baptism, and had not yet come spiritually to the priests, yet that they were made clean was made known both by the Holy Spirit descending upon them, and by the wonder of the gift of tongues (Acts x. 45, 46).

And one of them when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God.

This one who went back giving glory to God is a figure of the one Church, in devout humility before Christ. He falling down before the feet of the Lord, gives fitting thanks. For he truly gives thanks to God who repressing the thoughts of his own presumption, is humbly aware of how weak he is in himself; he who attributes no virtue to himself; who confesses that the good he does, is due to the mercy of his Creator. Hence, fittingly, He adds: *And this was a Samaritan*. For Samaritan means *guardian*. And by this name that people is very aptly signified who, giving thanks, attribute all it has received to Him from whom it received it; as the singer in the psalm declares: *I will keep my strength for thee; for thou art my protector: my God, his mercy shall go before me* (Ps. lviii. 10). He falls on his face, ashamed because of the sins he remembers he has committed. For when a man is ashamed it is then he humbles himself. And for the same reasons Paul said to certain persons who as it were lay face to the ground: *What fruit therefore had you then in those things of which you are now ashamed* (Rom. vi. 21)? On the other hand, of *the rider of the horse* (Amos ii. 15) that is, of the man lifted above himself by the glory of this world, it is said: *That this rider may fall backwards* (Gen. xlix. 17). And again, it was written of the persecutors of the Lord that, *They went backward and fell to the ground* (Jn. xviii. 6).

What does this mean, that the elect fall on their faces, and the reprobate falls backwards, if not that he who falls backwards does not, beyond doubt, see where he falls; while he who falls forward, sees here he is falling? The wicked therefore, since they do not see into what they are falling, are said to fall backwards; for they rush headlong where they cannot now see what will then happen to them. But the just fall as it were upon their faces; for moved by fear, they humble themselves: of their own free will they throw themselves down amid things visible, that they may be raised up amid things invisible.

And Jesus, answering said: Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine?

One added to nine completes a symbol of unity. By it a certain whole is arrived at, so that number goes no further, except that it returns again to one, and this rule is observed in all numbering, to infinity. So nine need one that they may be joined together under a certain aspect of unity,