**1 17 16**

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK**

***“Then one of them (****of the 10 lepers****), when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.”***

On this twelfth Sunday of Luke and in celebration of our blessed Father among the Saints Anthony the Great, we hear this beautiful Gospel of the healing of the ten lepers by our Lord. And of the ten, only one, who was a Samaritan- a stranger and not a part of the people of God- only he came back to give the Lord thanks. And, as is clear at the end of the Gospel, it was only this one leper, who was truly healed. And for us, beloved, we must recognize that it is only if we nurture thankful hearts that we can become truly whole and truly human. To be thankful is one of our deepest needs, for this is how we were created.

We might ask, why does the Lord wish us to be thankful? Is it because He needs our thanks? To answer this question, let us ask a more earthly question. Why does a parent wish his children to be thankful? Is it because he or she needs to be thanked? Why do we teach our children to say “thank you”? Does this help us? No, certainly not, it is for their benefit that we nurture this attitude of thanksgiving. We do not want them to be wild and selfish. The root of Thanksgiving (Eucharistia) in the Greek is “Charis” which means grace. If we are not thankful, we have no grace. Grace dwells in us through thanksgiving. Imagine a child who is ungrateful, who feels that everything he receives is deserved, and who feels that everything that exists centers around himself. Who would wish to be around such a child? Rather, we wish our children to be noble, to be humble, and to be able to express love. There is no love, no humility, and no nobility without thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is the only antidote to self-centeredness. Self-centeredness, by its very nature, excludes the ability to love. And, the ability to truly love is what the image of God inside of us is. Here we come to the most important point- God, Himself, is thankful! Numerous times our Lord expressed thanksgiving. For example, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead He said***, "Father, I thank You (****Eucharisteo****) that You have heard Me. (Joh 11:41 NKJ).***

Beloved, let each one of us also be raised from the dead by nurturing thanksgiving deep inside of our hearts. To be thankful means to recognize things as they truly are. Let us then give thanks for the air we breathe, for every morsel of food that God gives to us, for His trees and His mountains which give us so much beauty, for our relationships, for our loved ones. Let us give thanks even when we suffer, for it is an opportunity to grow closer to our Lord, to share in His love, to share in His glory, to grow in patience, and to proclaim with joy that death has no real power over us!