

## WHERE ARE THE OTHER NINE?

Fr. Martin Chittadiyil V.C.

Margaret Mary Alacoque was the Saint to whom Jesus revealed the mysteries of his Sacred Heart. Once in her vision the face of Jesus looked distorted with grief and pain and so Margaret asked him the reason for this change. Jesus then told her that the indifference and the ingratitude of the people have grieved and pained his heart. The Sacred Heart of Jesus beckons us to a life that is keen on divine matters and to have a heart that throbs with gratitude.

There is a story about a person who had the rare privilege of visiting Heaven. As he was walking with his Guardian Angel enjoying and admiring the ecstatic sights and sounds of heaven, he saw an office in which some angels were working in great haste and hurry. He asked his Guardian Angel why there were such hurried activities there. The Guardian Angel replied, "The people on the earth are incessantly sending so many prayers, requests and supplications to God. The office you see is where all these are received. The man was satisfied with the answer.

They continued their tour. Then the man saw another very busy office. Once again, the man was curious to know what was happening there and he asked the Angel. The Angel replied, "When people make their requests and demands, God will feel pity for them and then he gives them graces and blessings that will help them in their salvation and in solving their problems. This is the office from where these things are despatched to the earth." The man was happy.

They proceeded further. There appeared another office. But here, unlike in the other two, there was no indication of any haste or hurry. Even before the man enquired what that office was doing, the Angel asked him, "Don't you want

to know what office is that? It is the office which receives thanksgivings from people. God wants his children to be grateful to him for all the blessings and graces he gives them. But most people forget to thank God for the benevolent acts he does to them and that is why this office is not at all busy.”

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess 5:16-18).

Once, Jesus healed 10 lepers. Only one of them came back to fall at the feet of Jesus and offer him thanks. The one who came was a Gentile Samaritan. Jesus then asked him, “Weren’t ten people healed? Where are the other nine?” Why only this Gentile had the grateful heart to come back and thank Jesus to glorify God? What special blessing did this grateful Gentile get when he came back to say “Thank you” to Jesus? The other nine got only a temporary physical healing. But to the grateful Gentile Jesus gave not just the physical healing but the gift of eternal salvation. Jesus said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well” (Lk 17:19).

Piety is a big gain for the one who is contented with what he has. We did not bring anything to this world when we came. And we know that we won’t be able to carry anything from here when we go. “Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that” (1 Tim 6:6-8).

There is a popular saying that “As I had no shoes, I cried bitterly until I saw a man without legs at all.” This points to the ingratitude we often exhibit for the wonderful blessings and graces God often graciously gives us. The reason for the grief and uneasiness of many people is not that God hasn’t given them any blessings, but they fail to recognise them and thank and glorify God for them. Man has the nasty habit of looking around and comparing himself

with others and then feeling sorry for the blessings he hasn't received. This brings in the poison of discontentment. Such discontentment often leads the perdition of the soul of man.