THANKSGIVING DAY IN THE U.S. (Nov 25, 2021). Sirach 50:22-24; I Cor 1:3-9; Luke 17:11-19.

"Were not ten made clean, where are the other nine?”

Thanksgiving is the most uniquely American of all our holidays. Historically/Traditionally it was first celebrated in the winter of 1610 at Jamestown, when the hunger and disease had reduced a group of 409 settlers to 60. The survivors had prayed for help without knowing when or how it might come. And when help arrived in the form of a ship filled with food and supplies from England, a prayer meeting was held to give communal thanks to God. Then eventually, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln, established Thanksgiving Day as a formal holiday on which we express our thanks to God for the many blessings He has provided.

**Significance:** Thanksgiving is the favorite holiday of many Americans. It has the simplicity of a family gathering together for a meal, with Turkey leading the procession. Why should we be thankful this day? We must learn to be thankful, or we will either become bitter and discouraged, or grow arrogant and self-satisfied**. Let us remember the Irish proverb: "Once I complained I had no shoes – until I saw a man who had no feet."**

**Religious:** However, Thanksgiving Day also has a profound religious meaning, because giving thanks is the very heart of our natural and spiritual life. **For us as Catholics, the central act of worship is called the** **Eucharist, a Greek word for Thanksgiving**. In the Mass, we give thanks to God through Jesus, and share a sacred meal in which we acknowledge the fact that everything we have comes from God.

**It is noteworthy that there are basically two types of people in our world:** **the grateful and the ungrateful.** Hence, today’s Gospel tells the story of the ten lepers whom Jesus healed. Only one of them, a Samaritan - a non-Jew despised and held unclean for being of mixed race, pagan– returned to give Him thanks. The other nine (who were “real” Jews), apparently considered their healing as something they had a right to, whereas the Samaritan took it as an undeserved gift from God.

**Life Message:** **This Gospel reminds us, that God, too, desires our thanks. "Where are the other nine?” Jesus asks with pain. That is why St. Paul admonishes us, "Always be thankful" (Col 3:17).**

Gathered around the altar celebrating the Eucharist, we find that our expression of thanks becomes part of the great Thanksgiving Prayer of Christ, which unites the mighty chorus of all God’s people. We should give thanks for this parish community in which we gather together. It is in this community that we meet Christ in the Breaking of the Bread and receive the Sacraments that nourish and strengthen us along the way. As the icing on the cake, on Thanksgiving Day in many of our rural parishes, people usually bring items such as fruits and grains/drinks, which were then blessed by the pastor before being taken home-to show their gratitude and thanks to God their maker and provider. **Hence, “let us give thanks to the Lord our God. For it is right to give God thanks and praise!”**