

Some years ago,
a magazine carried an article
about a man who was fishing,
one night, out in a bay in a small
rowboat.

The day was getting late,
and everything was quiet,
except for a man on the deck of a
yacht anchored in the bay.

The man had been drinking and,
occasionally, bellowed out some
incoherent sentence,
disturbing the stillness of the
night.

The fishermen ignored him and
concentrated on his fishing.

Suddenly, the fishermen heard a
loud splash.
He turned and, in the moonlight,
saw that the man on the yacht had
toppled into the water.

Stripping off his jacket,
the fishermen dove into the water
and swam over to the man.
After incredible effort,
he managed to get the man back
on his yacht.

At this moment, the fishermen saw
that the man was barely
breathing. Frantically,
he gave him artificial
respiration and got him breathing

normally again.

When the man seemed to be all
right,
the fishermen put him to bed on
the yacht and swam back to his
tiny rowboat.

He could not resume his fishing.
As he was sopping wet,
he went back to shore to dry
himself.

The next morning,
the fishermen returned to the
yacht to see if the man needed
any help.

The man was brusque and
abusive.

At this point, the fishermen
reminded him that he had risked
his life the night before to pull him
from the water and save him.

Instead of thanking the fishermen,
the man shouted at him and
ordered him off his yacht.

As the fishermen rowed away in
his tiny boat,
his eyes filled up with tears.
He could not believe what had just
happened.

Looking up to heaven,
he prayed:
"Lord, now I know how you must
feel. You gave your life to save us.

But, like the man on that yacht,
instead of thanking you,
we treated you like an enemy and
ordered you to leave us alone.
Now I know how you must feel,
Lord! Now I know!"
And it breaks my heart!"

Today, we saw how Jesus was
subject to ingratitude by nine of
the ten lepers whom He had
healed.

Jesus showed great compassion
for the lepers.

Jesus didn't distance Himself from
them; rather, He miraculously
healed them.

Yet, only one of the ten lepers
came back to thank him.

Like these nine lepers,
when God gives to people what
they want,
many never come to church to
express gratitude.

You might remember that the
word, *Eucharist* comes from a
Greek word which means
"Thanksgiving."

English Anglican priest and poet
Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy (1883-
1929) wrote a poem comparing
Christ's coming to the City of
Birmingham in England, and His
coming to the Cross on Calvary:

"When Jesus came to Calvary
They nailed him on a tree
They crowned Him with a crown of
thorns
Red were His wounds and deep
For those were cold and cruel
days
When human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham
They only passed Him by
They would not hurt a hair of Him
They would only let Him die
When men have grown more
tender
They would not give Him pain
They only just past down the
street
And left Him in the rain

The cold rain. The winter rain!
That soaked Him through and
through.
And when all the crowd had left
the street without a soul to see
Jesus Christ leant against a wall
and *s i g h e d* for Calvary."

In other words, dying on the Cross
on Calvary was more endurable
than the indifference of men!
And there are many today who
show no gratitude to Christ for
dying on the Cross.
*Did you notice that the lepers
were the ones who came to Jesus?*

Before Jesus met them,
they called to Him while He was
some way off.

The lepers' plea for help reminds
me of a saying.

**"When a child runs to his
mother,
this behaviour means that he
wants something;
whereas, when a mother runs
to the child, she does so
because the child is in
danger."**

Today, 13 October is known as
"Fatima Day."

It's the day that the Miracle of the
Sun took place in Fatima in
1917.

By October, Portugal was stirred
by the events taking place at
Fatima.

The newspapers were particularly
interested,
especially in the statement that a
great miracle was to take
place.

Many reporters and photo-
graphers were on hand to record
the events or to prove that the
statement was nothing more than
lies.

It rained all night of the 12th and
the morning of the 13th of October.
By noon, more than 70,000 people
had gathered.

Standing in the mud up to their
ankles,
they huddled together under
umbrellas seeking protection from
the relentless rain as they prayed
the Rosary.

Shortly after noon,
Our Lady arrived for her final
appearance.

She told the children:
**"I am the Lady of the Rosary.
I have come to warn the
faithful to amend their lives
and to ask pardon for their
sins.**

**They must not offend Our Lord
any more,
for He is already too
grievously offended by the
sins of men.**

**People must say the Rosary.
Let them continue saying it
every day."**

As Our Lady was about to leave,
she pointed to the sun.
The people looked into the sky.
The rain ceased,
the clouds parted,
and the sun shone forth,
but not in its usual brilliance.
Instead, it appeared like a silver
disc, pale as the moon,
at which all could gaze without
straining their eyes.
Suddenly, impelled by some

mysterious force,
the disc began to whirl in the
sky,
casting off great shafts of multi-
coloured light.
Red, green, blue, yellow, violet-
enormous rays shot across the sky
at all angles,
lighting up the entire countryside
for many miles around,
but particularly the upturned faces
of those 70,000 spellbound
people.

After three minutes,
the wonder stopped,
but resumed again a second and a
third time – three times in all –
within about 12 minutes.
The whole world seemed to be on
fire,
with the sun spinning at a greater
speed each time.

Then, a gasp of terror rose from
the crowd,
for the sun seemed to tear itself
from the heavens and come
crashing down upon the horrified
crowd.

Just when it seemed that the ball
of fire would destroy them,
the miracle ceased and the sun
resumed its normal place in the
sky,
shinning forth as peacefully as
ever.

When the people arose from the
ground,
cries of astonishment were
heard on all sides.
Their clothes – which had been
soaking wet and muddy – now
were clean and dry.
Many of the sick and crippled had
been cured of their afflictions.

Among the messages Our Lady of
Fatima gave us, she said:
**"Tell everybody that God gives
graces through the
Immaculate Heart of Mary.
Tell them to ask graces from
her,
and that the Heart of Jesus
wishes to be venerated
together with the
Immaculate Heart of Mary.
Ask them to plead for the
peace from the Immaculate
Heart of Mary,
for the Lord has confided the
peace of the world to her."**

Just as we are moved by the
Holy Spirit to express our gratitude
to God,
we do well to also thank Our Lady
of Fatima for all that she does to
help us come closer to her Son.
If our gratitude is genuine,
then we will spread her message
so that others may also be saved.