

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 12<sup>th</sup> and  
the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> 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.