

# ***The Mechanics of Gratitude***

*A Reflection on the Readings for Wednesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012*

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I cannot grasp the inner mechanics of gratitude. Ten are healed and but one returns to offer thanks. How does that happen? It is a question raised in our household regularly. I get up (very) early every morning to get my teenage sons out of bed, feed them, make their lunches and drive them to the commuter rail stop where they take the morning train to school. It is a rare morning when I receive an expression of gratitude. Can they not recognize that I am sacrificing for them in ways large and small? Their lives are buffered from want and deprivation and sustained by the largesse of others. But then, if I am honest, so is mine and if I am better at offering gratitude, it is more a matter of mastering the rules of social etiquette than the expression of a truly grateful heart.

So we return to the mysterious mechanics of gratitude. Why did the one leper, the Samaritan, return with gratitude in his heart? Did the healing words of Jesus penetrate beyond his leprous exterior to heal a soul scarred by hatred and exclusion? Did his outsider status forestall any buffered existence and make him more open to mercy?

Jesus, gracious healer, give me the Samaritan's heart. May your Spirit pierce the fog of privilege and expectation that envelopes me. Help me live with a grateful heart ever mindful of the "the kindness and generous love of God" that alone gives my life meaning and purpose.