

Automatic Transcription

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, amen in all things give thanks, but this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you all. The Catholic Church was just a bit over 70 years old when the Roman Emperor Trajan decreed that Christians must sacrifice to pagan gods or face death. But there was a man, and he was a bishop. Having led his flock through intense Roman persecutions before, he could not imagine shrinking back now. The other man, whose face graced the coins of the most powerful empire in the known world, said, bow. But this disciple of St. John the Evangelist, as it were, replied in the words of Ananias, Micheael, and Azarias of old, "Behold, our God, whom we worship, is able to save us from the furnace of birth burning fire, and to deliver us out of thy hands, o king, but if he will not, be it known to thee, O king, that we will not worship thy gods, nor adore the golden statue which thou hast set up. For his impertinence, Ignatius was bound in chains and transported from Antioch to Rome, though the journey was grueling, Ignatius remained fateful of courage, and he wrote seven letters to various Catholic churches along the way. Through these letters he urged Catholics to remain steadfast, and defended the divinity of Jesus Christ and his holy doctrine. In 108 A.D., Ignatius returned a thanks to God, and even as he was torn apart by lions, he said, I am God's wheat, ground by the teeth of beasts, to become pure bread for Christ. Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I say rejoice. Today she'd be called drop dead gorgeous, born to Roman wealth, at just 12 or 13 years of age, had she had consecrated herself to Christ, vowing lifelong virginity. But her beauty, both physical and spiritual, made her a magnet for suitors, and she caught the eye of the son of a Roman prefect. Despite his status, she refused his proposal of marriage, just as she had dismissed all the others that she had received. Agnes declared, I am devoted to God alone." Her rejection enraged the prefect's son, and he had her arrested. With that the threats and attempt attempts to force her to renounce her beliefs began. Although she was sent to a brothel, Agnes remained resolute, and miracles protected her purity, even one that involved the growth of hair to cover her body. Ultimately, Agnes was sentenced to death. Whether by beheading or by being stabbed in the throat, we are not quite sure, but of this we are certain. Agnes returned her thanks to God, and she embraced her execution with serenity and courage, praying as she died. all whatsoever you do, in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. He was a pagan actor, a comedian in Rome. He was especially known for his anti Catholic antics, and had a predilection for plays that mocked Catholic rituals. One fine day, as our Lord would have it, this comedian set about the task of enacting a satire of holy baptism. Suddenly, in the midst of his efforts to taunt Catholics, our Lord cast him down from his theatrical horse and called him to himself. In the midst of his mockery, he was struck by a profound sense of God's grace, and experienced like St. Paul a sudden conversion to Christ. Without warning, the comedian, the comedy did at 180, and Genesius publicly proclaimed the truth of Christ to the audience. Diocletian was enraged and ordered him arrested. Gysius was tortured, and he refused to recant, but he did return his thanks to God. Thus it was that Genesius was numbered among the martyrs to Christ in Rome. I give thanks to my God in every remembrance of you. Yes, he is the one who felled the tree in Germany, and that was no ordinary tree. Indeed, it was Denar's oak, a massive tree that was venerated by the pagan Germanic tribes, a symbol of the god of thunder. The Norse called him Thor, but we'd call him Denar, because we know that the Germans always know better, don't we? But no, really, it doesn't matter, after all, whether it was Dinars oak or Thor's oak, because in the end, at the hand and with the ax of Boniface of Wessex, an English born German, that Thor's massive oak became a heap of firewood for the next winter. for this, the apostle of Germans, a monk, missionary, and a bishop, who had dedicated his life to spreading the Catholic religion among the pagan tribes of Germania, for this the founder of the Sea of Maines, and his companions were ambushed by a band of pagan warriors, but he, facing his attackers calmly, urged his followers to do likewise, and to trust God. And as Boniface returned his thanks to God, holding a gospel book before him, he, too, joined the ranks of the holy martyrs. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean,

went back, and with a loud voice glorifying God, and he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks, and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were not ten made clean, and where are the nine? Dear friends, of this we may be sure. The disciple is not above his master. What they did to the master, they will without hesitation do to the servant as well. If the way of the cross is the way of the master, then likewise it will be the way of the servant. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Oh, as St. Paul would say it, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But, friends, to day's gospel is not about times of trouble, hardship, or persecution. No, it's about blessing. Thus through the healing of the ten lepers, our Lord reveals that even when God makes it easy, we often enough fail to return Him thanks. So on this thirteenth Sunday, after Pentecost, as we receive upon our tongues and in our persons, the body, blood, soul, and the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us beseech our heavenly Father for the grace to be unlike the nine, the grace to be numbered with the one, who went back, and with a loud voice glorified God, the grace to fall on our faces before his feet, and return our thanks to him, saying, Almighty, eternal God, grant us an increase of faith, hope, and charity, and make us love what you command, so that we may be made worthy to attain what you promise. Grant us your servants, O Lord God, we beseech you, to enjoy lasting health of mind and body, and by the intercession of glorious and blessed Mary, of a virgin, may we be delivered from present sorrow and partake to the full of eternal happiness, through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigning with thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God whirl without end. Amen. Our Lady help of Christians, pray for us. Most sacred heart of Jesus, have mercy on us. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.