

Mother of God Community
Sunday Night Prayer Meeting
September 24, 2017
Gratitude
Hall Miller

Why? What is the basis of our gratitude?

Because:

- We remember all that God has done
- We recall the very character of God
- In faith we see God as benevolently loving us unconditionally
- We acknowledge that we are sinners who have been redeemed at the very highest cost God could pay. That He would leave the 99 to save me!
- That by virtue of our baptism and through faith God has come to dwell in us!
- That God has called and commissioned each one of us priest, prophet and king calling and empowering us to live in the grace and authority of the kingdom of God now, and spend eternity with Him in heaven!

Can we see now why Ignatius saw ingratitude as “the cause, beginning, and origin of all evils and sins” that he understood ingratitude as a willful blindness to the truth. The psalmist cried out, “what shall I render to the Lord for all His bounty to me?” PS 116. This is gratitude. For the religious Jew, even to this day, every day is filled with opportunities to give thanks and praise to God.

Thanksgiving as a way of life

Jones and Meyers write that, “to be grateful, to give thanks is simply to acknowledge the real world, to see our lives for what they really are; utterly dependent on the grace of God and the goodwill and care of others.”

They go on to say, “most importantly gratitude is both the content and motivation in our relationship with God... Once we realize the truth of who God is and grasp the depth of His love, our lives must become an act of gratitude to God... as a people our very life meaning and purpose is gratitude, thanksgiving and praise.”

So my encounter with the living God in my life and my gratitude for all that He has done impels me to daily acts of love; prayer and service. My response, my “deeds,” come from gratitude.

How do we increase, guard and protect gratitude in our hearts?

- Meditate on the truth, on God’s goodness, becoming more conscious.
- Praise Him for these truths
- Examine our conscience; what obstacles are there to gratitude?
- Daily offer our lives in devotion
- Offer our lives in service
 - God has given all to me
 - I respond freely giving all back to Him (Ignatius prayer- Suscipe)

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There is so much more to gratitude than good manners or courtesy. Gratitude is fundamental to a Christian's life and calling. Gratitude enables a generous response, on our part, to a God who is the "infinitely generous giver of gifts."

APPENDIX:

What have we been doing tonight? Charismatic Praise and Worship is filled with thanksgiving; gratitude to God. Praising God for;

- For who He is in Himself
- For the incomprehensible love He has for us
- Redemption!
 - He stepped down from heaven into our lowly existence
 - He loved us unto death on the cross

As we Praise God our hearts are moved by deepening truth, awareness of God and gratitude. This movement of the Holy Spirit has sparked a new praise of God in the hearts of His people.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

V. PRAYER OF PRAISE

2639 Praise is the form of prayer which recognizes most immediately that God is God. It lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, quite beyond what he does, but simply because HE IS. It shares in the blessed happiness of the pure of heart who love God in faith before seeing him in glory. By praise, the Spirit is joined to our spirits to bear witness that we are children of God,¹²¹ testifying to the only Son in whom we are adopted and by whom we glorify the Father. Praise embraces the other forms of prayer and carries them toward him who is its source and goal: the "one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist."¹²²

Psalm 100:4 Enter his gates with **thanksgiving** and his courts with praise; give **thanks** to him and praise his name.

Psalm 95:2 Let us come before him with **thanksgiving** and extol him with music and song.

Psalm 69:30 I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with **thanksgiving**.

Ezra 3:11 With praise and **thanksgiving** they sang to the Lord: "He is good; his love toward Israel endures forever." And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

Nehemiah 12:8 The Levites were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and also Mattaniah, who, together with his associates, was in charge of the songs of **thanksgiving**.

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[Nehemiah 12:24](#) And the leaders of the Levites were Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua son of Kadmiel, and their associates, who stood opposite them to give praise and **thanksgiving**, one section responding to the other, as prescribed by David the man of God.

[Nehemiah 12:27](#) [*Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem*] At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites were sought out from where they lived and were brought to Jerusalem to celebrate joyfully the dedication with songs of **thanksgiving** and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres.

“The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.” (Lumen Gentium, 11)

The word “Eucharist” is a transliteration of the Greek word *eucharistia*, which is itself a translation of the Hebrew word *berekah*. **All three words have the meaning of thanksgiving, or praise for the wonderful works of God.**

*“Is not the cup of **thanksgiving** for which we give **thanks** a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?”* [1 Corinthians 10:16](#)

Most Hebrew prayers begin with the words “*Baruch atah adonai, Eloheinu...*” which is usually translated as “Blessed are you, Lord God...” Jews have traditionally viewed all the goods of the earth as gifts of God for which they are called to frequently give thanks and praise. For the religious Jew, even to this day, every day is filled with opportunities to give thanks and praise to God. “The word *eucharistein* recalls the Jewish blessings that proclaim – especially during a meal – God’s works: of creation, redemption and sanctification.” Catholic Catechism, #1328

We are a people called to be eternally thankful to God! We Give Him thanks and praise for who He is!
Our hearts are to be filled with thanksgiving!

[2 Corinthians 4:15](#) *All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause **thanksgiving** to overflow to the glory of God.*

Contemplation to Attain the Love of God (Spiritual Exercises)

- We are to ponder, “How much God our Lord has done for me and how much He has given me of what he possesses.”
- We are to imagine “all blessings and gifts as descending from above... as rays of light descend from the sun and as waters flow from their fountain.”
- We meditate on how God “dwells in me and gives me being, life, sensation, intelligence.”
- We think about “how God works and labors for me in all creatures upon the face of the earth.”

This is God- endlessly bestowing gifts like rays of the sun, ceaselessly working, infinitely generous.

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Suscipe- St. Ignatius of Loyola

*Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
All I have and call my own.*

You have given all to me.

To you, Lord, I return it.

*Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.*

We give God what he doesn't have – our freedom, memory, understanding and will out of gratitude for graces received.