



Remember!

Return in Thanksgiving

During this month when we gather with family and friends to celebrate Thanksgiving, it is a fitting time to stop and remember the many gifts we have been given. To take it one step further, it is appropriate to look at all we have as God's gift, undeservedly given, and express our gratitude to Him for His goodness and generosity.

We can randomly pick a few things that we want to be thankful for, but taking a look in detail at areas of our life will inspire a more robust list. First, we want to notice our interior gifts: life, health, strength, reason, enjoyment, the light of conscience, whatever we have good and holy within us, whatever faith we have, whatever of a renewed will to choose the good, whatever love we have towards God, whatever self-control we have gained over ourselves, whatever desire and hope we have of Heaven. When we are grateful, we are acknowledging that the sources of the goodness that we have received are outside of ourselves. Scripture confirms that "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17).

Let us now look at relationships and formation: God has given us relatives, friends, education, training, knowledge, the Bible, the Catholic Church. All of this comes from our loving Father.

We can try to gain a fuller view of who we are as a child of God and where we are, in our Heavenly Father's Kingdom. Let us humbly and reverently attempt to trace His guiding hand in the years we have lived. Let us thankfully commemorate the many mercies He has granted to us in time past, the many sins He has not remembered, the many dangers He has averted, the many prayers He has answered, the many mistakes He has corrected, the many warnings, the many lessons, the guiding light, the abounding comfort He has from time to time given. Let us dwell upon times and seasons, times of trouble, times of joy, times of trial, times of refreshment.-Our Heavenly Father truly cherishes us as His children!

How did the Lord guide us with His wise discipline, restrain our passions, calm our fears, enliven our heaviness, and strengthen our infirmities! How did He gently guide us toward the right path! How did He draw us along His everlasting way? Jesus has been

all things to us. (The above meditation entitled "Remembering to Return in Thanksgiving" is adapted from the writings of Saint John Henry Newman.)

After thinking back through your life, write down ten things that you want to specifically be grateful to God for this Thanksgiving. Since Eucharist means thanksgiving, returning to Mass on Thanksgiving Day is the best place to express your gratefulness. Thank Jesus for all of the good gifts on your list, and most especially, for the gift of Himself to you in the Holy Eucharist.

Even now we can turn to the Lord with a thankful heart: O God our Heavenly Father, giver of all good gifts; You have provided abundantly with the blessings of life and all that sustains life, especially the new life of grace given to us through the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In flame us with the spirit of gratitude, that we may ever return thanks, especially through our Sunday Eucharistic worship, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

By Ann Lankford