

VINTAGE Saints & Sinners

Thanksgiving

"O Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to God with songs of praise! For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods."
Psalm 95:1-3

Do not let the empty cup be your first teacher of the blessings you had when it was full. Do not let a hard place here and there in the bed destroy your rest. Seek, as a plain duty, to cultivate a buoyant, joyous sense of the crowded kindnesses of God in your daily life.
--Alexander Maclaren

But we who would be born again indeed, must wake our souls unnumbered times a day. --George MacDonald

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. --Colossians 2:6-7

Saying Grace

Here is supper. It smells good.

It looks good. It tastes good.

It is good.

All good things come from You.

Let the sweet taste of You

Become the constant blessing on my tongue. ---Gunilla Norris

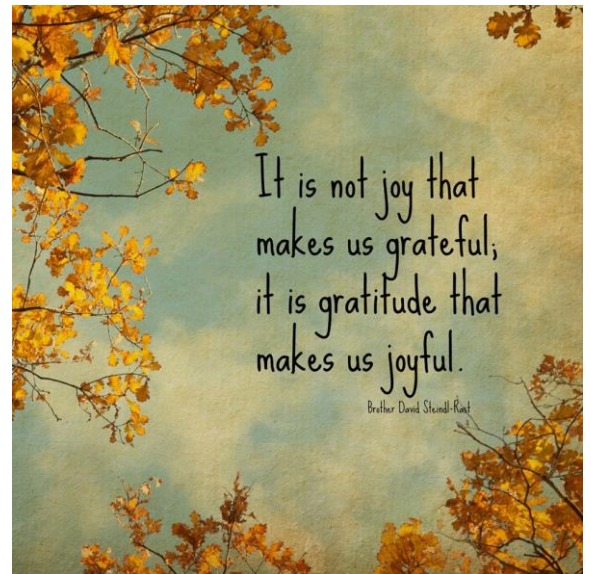
**"Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, God's love endures forever."
Psalm 118:29**

Every moment and every event of every person's life on earth plants something in her or his soul. For just as the wind carries thousands of winged seeds, so each moment brings with it germs of spiritual vitality that come to rest imperceptibly in the minds and wills of men and women. Most of these unnumbered seeds perish and are lost, for such seeds as these cannot spring up anywhere except in the good soil of freedom, spontaneity and love --Thomas Merton

"I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds." Ps. 9:1

Every moment is a new gift, over and over again, and if you miss the opportunity of this moment, another moment is given to us, and another moment. We can avail ourselves of this opportunity, or we can miss it, and if we avail ourselves of the opportunity, it is the key to happiness. Behold the master key to our happiness in our own hands. Moment by moment, we can be grateful for this gift.

Does that mean that we can be grateful for everything? Certainly not. We cannot be grateful for violence, for war, for oppression, for exploitation. On the personal level, we cannot be grateful for the loss of a friend, for unfaithfulness, for bereavement. But I didn't say we can be grateful for everything. I said we can be grateful in every given moment for the opportunity, and even when we are confronted with something that is terribly difficult, we can rise to this occasion and respond to the opportunity that is given to us. ...Most of the time, what is given to us is the opportunity to enjoy, and we only miss it because we are rushing through life and we are not stopping to see the opportunity....



So how can we find a method that will harness this? How can each one of us find a method for living gratefully, not just once in a while being grateful, but moment by moment to be grateful. How can we do it? It's a very simple method. It's so simple that it's actually what we were told as children when we learned to cross the street. Stop. Look. Go. That's all. But how often do we stop? We rush through life. We don't stop. We miss the opportunity because we don't stop. We have to stop. We have to get quiet. And we have to build stop signs into our lives.

When I was in Africa some years ago and then came back, I noticed water. In Africa where I was, I didn't have drinkable water. Every time I turned on the faucet, I was overwhelmed. Every time I clicked on the light, I was so grateful. It made me so happy. But after a while, this wears off. So I put little stickers on the light switch and on the water faucet, and every time I turned it on, water. So leave it up to your own imagination. You can find whatever works best for you, but you need stop signs in your life. And when you stop, then the next thing is to look. You look. You open your eyes. You open your ears. You open your nose. You open all your senses for this wonderful richness that is given to us. There is no end to it, and that is what life is all about, to enjoy, to enjoy what is given to us.

And then we can also open our hearts, our hearts for the opportunities, for the opportunities also to help others, to make others happy, because nothing makes us more happy than when all of us are happy...Stop, look, and then go, and really do something. And what we can do is whatever life offers to you in that present moment. Mostly it's the opportunity to enjoy, but sometimes it's something more difficult. But whatever it is, if we take this opportunity, we go with it, we are creative, those are the creative people. And that little stop, look, go, is such a potent seed that it can revolutionize our world.

---Brother David Steindl-Rast

"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful." Col. 4:2

Life itself is an exercise in learning to sing 'alleluia' here in order to recognize the face of God hidden in the recesses of time. To deal with the meaning of 'alleluia' in life means to deal with moments that don't feel like 'alleluia moments' at all. -- Joan Chittister

Alleluia is not a substitute for reality. It is simply the awareness of another whole kind of reality—beyond the immediate, beyond the delusional, beyond the instant perception of things. One of the oldest anthems of the church is Alleluiah means simply "all hail to the One who is." It is the arch-hymn of praise, the ultimate expression of thanksgiving, the pinnacle of triumph, the acme of human joy, It says that God is good — and we know it. In the Hebrew Scriptures the word is an injunction to praise, a call to the people to summon up praise in themselves. It is a challenge to see in life more than is seeable in any single moment and to trust it.

---Joan Chittister & Rowan Williams

Thou that hast given so much to me,
Give one thing more, a grateful heart....
Not thankful, when it pleaseth me;
As if thy blessings had spare days:
But such a heart, whose pulse may be
Thy praise. --George Herbert (1593- 1633)

O Lord, that lends me life, lend me a heart replete with thankfulness. --William Shakespeare

i thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky;and for everything
wich is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday;this is the birth
day of life and love and wings:and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any-lifted from the no
of all nothing-human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

---e.e. cummings

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." Col. 3:15