



**St Mary's
Parish
Haddington
Road**

**Serving
the
Community**

**Serving
the
City**



Finding Gratitude

Johann Christoph Arnold

Live your life so that the fear of death can never enter your heart. When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light. Give thanks for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food and for the joy of living. And if perchance you see no reason for giving thanks, rest assured the fault is in yourself.

—Ascribed to Chief Tecumseh

—**The medieval mystic** Meister Eckhart once suggested that if the only prayer we ever said was “thank-you,” it would still suffice. If we take his advice superficially, it might be easy enough to follow. Yet to give thanks to God from the bottom of our hearts for all he gives, and to live every day in a spirit of gratefulness, is work for a lifetime.

What does it mean to be thankful? Henri Nouwen writes:

To be grateful for the good things that happen in our lives is easy, but to be grateful for all of our lives – the good as well as the bad, the moments of joy as well as the moments of sorrow, the successes as well as the failures, the rewards as well as the rejections – that requires hard spiritual work. Still, we are only truly grateful people when we can say thank-you to all that has brought us to the present moment. As long as we keep dividing our lives between events and people we would like to remember and those we would rather forget, we cannot claim the fullness of our beings as a gift of God to be grateful for.

Let us not be afraid to look at everything that has brought us to where we are now and trust that we will soon see in it the guiding hand of a loving God.

It is just as important to be thankful for the bad things that happen to us as for the good things. So long as we shrink from every predicament, every situation that frightens us or sets us on edge, we will never know peace. This does not mean we must silently accept everything that comes our way. Jesus himself says we should pray, “Lead us not into temptation.” But because there is so much in life we cannot control, we must learn to look at things that test us not as obstacles, but as opportunities for growth.

French philosopher Simone Weil once wrote, “God continually showers the fullness of his grace on every being in the universe, but we consent to receive it to a greater or lesser extent. In purely spiritual matters, God grants all desires. Those who have less have asked for less.” It is an intriguing thought.

Then again, if we truly mean the words, “Thy will be done,” we will gratefully receive whatever God sees fit to give us. Even the children of Israel were answered with a rod of punishment at times. They did not only receive manna from heaven. As for the good things – family, food, house, friends, love, work – if we are honest, we must admit that we often take them for granted. We treat them as rights, rather than gifts.

Carroll King, a member of my church, notes that it is just when struggles or problems weigh most heavily on a person that gratitude can change his entire outlook on life:

Once when I was in a deep depression, it came to me that if I looked for even just one thing to be thankful for, that would be the first step up. There is always something you can find to be happy about... Freedom from fear and worry is something I have struggled with a lot in my life. But there is peace in laying your troubles in God's hands, and not only accepting the outcome he deems best for you, but being truly grateful for it – whatever it is.

The following lines from Jesuit priest Alfred Delp reflect the same attitude. They were written in 1944, from the prison where Delp awaited execution for speaking out against Hitler.

Outwardly things have never been worse. This is the first New Year I have ever approached without so much as a crust of bread to my name. I have absolutely nothing I can call my own. The only gesture of goodwill I have encountered is the jailers agreeing to fasten my handcuffs loosely enough for me to slip my left hand out. The handcuffs hang from my right wrist so I am able to write. But I have to keep one ear glued to the door – heaven help me if they should catch me at work!

Undeniably I find myself in the very shadow of the scaffold. Unless I can disprove the accusations on every point I shall most certainly hang.

Yet on the altar of my suffering much has been consumed by fire, and much has been melted and become pliable. It is one of God's blessings, and one of the signs of his indwelling grace, that I have been so wonderfully helped in keeping my vows. He will, I am confident, extend his blessing to my outward existence as soon as I am ready for the next task with which he wishes to entrust me. From this outward activity and intensified inner light, new passion will be born to give witness for the living God, for I have truly learned to know him in these days of trial and to feel his healing presence. The thought “God alone suffices” is literally and absolutely true.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer shows the same remarkable assurance in a prison letter he wrote to his fiancée, Maria Wedemeyer, on the eve of his execution: “You must not think that I am unhappy. What is happiness and unhappiness? It depends so little on the circumstances; it depends really only on what happens inside a person. I am grateful every day that I have you, and that makes me happy.”

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Website www.stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie email: info@stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie

Child Protection: <http://www.stmaryshaddingtonroad.ie/ministries/child-protection/> also www.csp.dublindioocese.ie

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In my experience, the most common root of ungratefulness is not hardship, but a false understanding of happiness. Both Delp and Bonhoeffer say the presence or absence of hardship need not have anything to do with our state of mind or soul. "God alone suffices." If only that thought would arouse in us the endless gratitude that it should!

Nothing can satisfy us when selfish expectations make us discontented with our lot; hence the cliché, "The pasture is always greener on the other side of the fence." So long as our vision is limited by the blinders of our own wants and needs, we will not be able to see those of others, let alone the things we have to be grateful for. My father once wrote to an unhappy friend, "You will always find reasons to grumble. If you want to find peace, you must be willing to give them up. I beg you: stop concentrating on your desire to be loved. It is the opposite of Christianity."



Quiet Hour
Advent Adoration
Every Saturday 7-8pm after Vigil Mass
What is Eucharistic Adoration?

Understood simply, Eucharistic Adoration is adoring or honouring the Eucharistic Presence of Christ. In a deeper sense, it involves "the contemplation of the Mystery of Christ truly present before us".

As is Advent, during Eucharistic Adoration, we "watch and wait", we remain "silent" in His Presence and open ourselves to His Graces which flow from the Eucharist ... By worshiping the Eucharistic Jesus, we become what God wants us to be! Like a magnet, The Lord draws us to Himself and gently transforms us.

In its fullest essence ... Eucharistic Adoration is "God and Man reaching out for each other, at the same time!"



Maire Ledwith-Butler Singing Studio
Annual Concert

St Mary's, Haddington Road
Friday 9 December, 7.30pm

A Nice Family Evening for All

ALPHA COURSE

10. The Church

Catherine Macaulay Centre, Herbert St,
Every Thursday till 8 December, at 7.30pm
ALL WELCOME _ COME ALONG

In Memoriam

6pm... Mary Moroney (Anniversary)
11am... Michael Shortt (Anniversary)
5pm... Seamus Daly

Masses on 10th /11th Dec 2016.
6pm... Annie Curran (Anniversary)
9.30am.. Niall Moloney (Anniversary)
11am... Irene Sharpe
5pm... Mc Carthy Family

Masses and Confession

Sundays: Vigil, 6pm (Saturday), 9.30am, 11am, 5pm

Weekdays 8am, 10am & 12.40

-**Rosary** daily after 10am mass

Confession Tuesday, Saturday after 10am mass

Adoration Blessed Sacrament, Weds 10.30-12.40

Church Collections

W/e: 26th /27th Nov 2016

1st Collection.... €1,185

2nd Collection... €900

THANK YOU

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