

## Reflection for October, 11, 2020

### **Allegiance to Gratitude**

*“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.”*

*God is creative and self-giving, generously moving in all the near and distant corners of the universe. Nothing exists that does not find its source in God. Our first response to God’s providence is gratitude. We sing thanksgiving.*

May the peace of the Lord be with you always.

Let us pray:

*Give me this day a heart of gratitude, O God. Give me a heart of gratitude which looks beyond my appreciation for things, for comfort, for peace, for prosperity. Give me a heart of gratitude which is ever and always thankful for you, the Giver. Give me a heart of gratitude which refuses to surrender to frivolous complaint, to seek more than you have given, to succumb to the annoyances and frustrations of this world. Give me a heart of gratitude which is so filled with thanksgiving that worry and concern have no room. Give me heart of gratitude which remembers you as the present Giver who is my refuge and my portion. Give me a heart of gratitude which cries out thanksgiving and praise even in the midst of anguish, pain, and frustration. Give me a heart of gratitude which is capable of love, hope, and peace despite the tensions, hurts, and foolishness of this world. Give me a heart of gratitude which is ever and always Yours. Amen.*

Robin Wall Kimmerer, a mother, scientist, decorated professor and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, in her beautifully written and engaging book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, reflects on gratitude: “Gratitude cultivates an ethic of fullness, but the economy needs emptiness. Gratitude doesn’t send you out shopping to find

satisfaction; it comes as a gift rather than a commodity. No declarations of political loyalty are required, just a response to a repeated question: Can we agree to be grateful for all that is given?" (p. 111).

Marcus Gee, one of my favourite journalists, offers these stirring sentiments on gratitude: "Visiting Ottawa this summer, I glanced up at the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill and saw the Canadian flag flying from its famous perch atop the spire. It is a lovely sight at any time. Way up there in the breeze, it stands out straight and true, a patch of brilliant red and white against the sky. This time, though, I found tears clouding my eyes—tears of gratitude.

"I feel grateful for many things in these troubling and confusing times, when so many people are suffering hardship and loss. One of them is having the simple good fortune to live in this wonderful country. How lucky I am—how lucky we all are—to inhabit such a stable, tolerant, prosperous, moderate, fundamentally decent place.

"The world is confronting the biggest crisis in recent memory. Many countries are flailing, including our great and admirable neighbour to the south. Canada, by contrast, is fairing remarkably well.

"At Canada's side is an extraordinary group of public servants: our public-health officials. Some of them have become heroes of the moment. They deserve to be. Guided by the discipline of science, they have given the country the best advice they can about this deadly and little-understood illness. Most Canadians have listened to that advice. They have washed their hands and kept their distance. It's a reach to say that this springs from some kind of moral superiority—how Canadians always put "we" before "me"—but, whatever the reason, they have obeyed the rules.

"Along with the understandable anxiety, this crisis has brought forth a surge of generosity and solidarity. Canadians are as one in their

appreciation for the brave personal-support workers, emergency-department staff and other everyday champions of COVID times.

“Of course, this country has its faults, too many to mention. It failed woefully to protect the old and the sick in its care homes. It failed to protect migrant workers. Its neediest neighbourhoods have suffered disproportionately, underlining its divides of race and class. An overdue reckoning sparked by the George Floyd killing has forced this country—like others—to shine a light on the sins of its past and the inequities of its present.

“But even as we struggle to overcome the faults, we should remember the virtues. They are legion. While Canadians naturally worry about how we will get through this and how life will change when it is over, they still have great faith in the country. Now more than ever, I thank my lucky stars that I live in Canada.”

Or, as we are wont to say, “Count your many blessings, count them one by one.” Choosing to live a life of gratitude is to foster a joyous relationship with God.

Let us pray:

*You are generous, God, never holding back your glory, never scrimping on light, saying: “That’s enough for one day”; never cutting short your feast of delicate blessings and small wonders. You are generous, God. You never keep track of sunset’s prodigal scarlet or dawn’s promise that everything is possible with you. You are generous, God, as we wonder what to ask, what to pray, what to give into this immense goodness and unfathomable grace. Bless the gifts we offer in whatever form or shape. Amen.*

*Rev. Bill Cantelon*