

Date: November 14, 2021 (Commemoration of Remembrance Sunday)

1. Texts: Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9; Ps. 116:1-8; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 6:37-40.
2. Subject: discipleship.
3. Topic: thanksgiving, praise and honour.
4. Aim: encourage, clarify.
5. Proposition: "We give credit where credit is due."

## CREDIT, THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE—WHERE THEY ARE DUE

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!"<sup>1</sup> The First Letter of Peter proclaims the author's praise for good reason. It is through God's great mercy that we have a path towards salvation. Of course we should praise him.

But, on the day that we remember the sacrifices of all armed services personnel, most would find it impossible to say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" We cannot praise God when our families are so severely damaged or even destroyed. We cannot praise God when a generation has been decimated.

Neither God nor the Church expects people to praise God in the face of death and destruction. We don't thank God that someone died in the service of his or her country. We thank God that people found the courage and strength to die for the country. We thank people who sacrificed life itself so that others could live in freedom and love.

This is an important distinction to make. We don't thank God for what others have chosen to do to bless us. We thank God for what he has done and we thank people for what they have done. As the old saying goes, "We give credit where credit is due."

So, Mr. Jones gives ten thousand dollars to the parish. We thank him for that. We don't thank God for it.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 1:3.

The tomb of the unknown soldier in Ottawa honours all the people who gave their lives in all the conflicts in which Canada has been involved. We give thanks to them for their sacrifice. We don't thank God for their deaths.

God did not provide the parish with ten thousand dollars. Mr. Jones did. God did not want, need or cause any soldier to die in any war. They chose bravery and courage over self-protection.

We give thanks to God who inspires generosity in Mr. Jones. We give thanks to God who strengthens those who face death.

We give thanks and praise to each as they bless us with their actions and choices.

In light of both Remembrance Day and All Souls Day, this is an important theological and ethical statement. We give credit where credit is due.

This truth enables us to recognize two important realities:

1. We choose to be the channels of blessing to other people. God does not force us to serve him.
2. God inspires us to be the channels of his blessing to people. We are privileged to serve him.

Think of it this way.

God doesn't make us do his will. He doesn't compel us to be generous or sacrificial. We have to make choices to be and act as God intends us to do.

God calls and challenges us to bless others through our decisions and actions. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit working in us, God encourages us to live as beacons of his life and love—even when that encouragement challenges us to sacrifice our lives for others.

By giving credit where credit is due, we can honour the choices people make and we can honour the involvement of God in our lives.

On this day, let's give honour and thanksgiving to those people who chose to sacrifice their lives so that others might live in freedom and love. [**Silence.**]

On this day, let's give honour and thanksgiving to God who inspired and guided such willingness to sacrifice. [**Silence.**]

But let's also turn this opportunity for recognition inwards. Give gratitude to God for some action that you took which blessed someone else. [**Silence.**]

On this day, give thanks to God for the ways in which he has inspired others to bless you. [**Silence.**]

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!"<sup>2</sup> That was surely the right thing for the author to write in First Peter. He was giving thanks and praise to God for something God had done.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" This is also the right thing for us to say as we celebrate Remembrance Day and All Souls Day. On this day we celebrate the heroic actions and sacrifices God inspired in uncounted people in all the struggles for freedom and love.

And today we add: "Blessed be those who have lived the life of Christ and demonstrated his love in sacrifice for us."

AMEN.

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter 1:3.