

Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity October 9, 2022

National Thanksgiving

“When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee”

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost Amen!

We are so very fortunate at our Parish that each year we are given the blessed opportunity to express our gratitude to Almighty God by devoting two Sundays to the theme of Thanksgiving. Last week we rejoiced in prayerfully considering the manifold goodness of God toward us in the miracle of the Harvest, and we realized how utterly dependant we all are upon the mercy of God to provide for our daily needs.

The Prayer Book service for Harvest Thanksgiving gives us as Christian believers a rich treasury of Scripture and Prayer that can be a source of grace and blessing not only at this time of year, but always and everywhere.

Today, the focus of our thanksgiving also includes humble gratitude to our Dear Father in Heaven for the graces we all enjoy as a nation, but also to remember that the foundation of all our rejoicing, is not the outward and visible, but in the spiritual certainty, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the True and Living Bread-the Heavenly Bread that can fully satisfy the hunger of the soul, and that is free to all who will come and receive it with humbleness of heart. Surely it is only as we remember the sheer goodness of God in giving us His dear Son, can we exercise in our hearts that attitude of humble gratitude for all that we have and are, that is the hallmark of the Christian believer.

So here we are on this blessed Lords Day thinking in particular of the many blessings and graces that our Blessed Lord has given us in our

dear native land of Canada. There should be none of us here today that is not humbled by the loving providence of God in providing this “good land” in which we find ourselves! How loving and patient God has been to us, and how rich in mercy towards us, as we seek to prosper in this land- a land that has mercifully been spared so much of the suffering and hardship that the rest of this darkened world has been forced to endure.

But if we are honest with ourselves, we will discover that so often we are anything but grateful to God! How often our gratitude is replaced by attitudes of complaint and resentment! How often are we quick to complain, and yet so often slow to seek the answers to our country’s challenges before the throne of Grace-seeking His will and purpose both for ourselves and for this land. It is so easy to fall into the trap of being critical, and yet forgetting to be grateful for all of the opportunities, and protections that our homeland provides for us.

This is not to say that all is well, and that we are living in a paradise-of course there are problems, of course there are issues and conflicts that need our attention! But let us approach these with hearts that are fixed upon Christ as the true answer to every need! As we consider with gratitude our blessings today, may we again and again remind ourselves that as this blessed land was founded upon the enduring principles of the Christian Faith, so we will only find real and lasting solutions to the vexing challenges that we are faced with every day in our country, by returning to these life giving principles both as individuals and as a nation!

Today’s emphasis is on gratitude, the gratitude that filled the heart of the Samaritan Leper, and that was sorely lacking in the others that our Lord healed in today’s Gospel reading. This blessed attitude of gratitude, that will open the door of heaven both to ourselves and to our nation , and that will bring healing to both our burdened souls and to our society!

How wonderful this gift of gratitude is-it can, and does, bring new life and hope to people and nations! It is a precious gift from the Father of All to us in our need! It is a gift that reminds us that we are not sufficient unto ourselves, but that our life and future is hidden with Christ in God, and so is safe and secure in Him!

Dear friends, we are often faced with a society that has abandoned those spiritual principles upon which peace, order, and good government are built. It seems that everyday we are faced as a nation with some new social theory or policy that runs contrary to what we know the revealed will of God to be! It can seem very dark at times can't it? It can seem that in spite of everything, all that has served us so well as a nation in the past is being questioned and in some cases abandoned for what is seen as a more accepting and tolerant attitude. In these situations dear friends, let us remember that this world, and nation are still under the watchful care of our Father in heaven, and so let us find our hope and certainty in His will and purpose for us!

This Sunday of National Thanksgiving is a day full of joy and promise, in spite of all the concerns and uncertainties that each of us are surrounded by. But let us today find our hope and assurance in the overwhelming love that our dearest Father in Heaven has shown to us. He has provided for our outward lives so generously hasn't he? But more importantly, He has ensured our eternal happiness and fulfillment in sending the one who is the great Desire of Nations-the one who has come to us in love and pity to be our Saviour, Lord, and Redeemer. It is The Lord Jesus Christ who is the real reason for the joy of this Thanksgiving Season, and it is He who has promised to draw us to Himself so that our joy might be full!

Dear friends, how can we begin to show our gratitude for all that we celebrate today? Perhaps the simplest answer to this question is that we

can begin to actually show our gratitude-we can express to one and all the gratitude that is within our hearts, and so witness to our dependence upon Christ for our whole lives. We can do this surely by simply saying thank you to those whom we love-our parents, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, fellow members of our parish family and so on. In other words, let us love-let us love as Christ loves us, with a humble, loving and radiant heart. Let us pray that our Blessed Jesus would fill us with a spirit of gratitude that embraces all that we might meet-a gratitude that finds its origin in the Holy sufferings of the Prince of Peace.

Above all today dear friends, let us lift our hearts to Almighty God and ask Him to Bless abundantly our Nation of Canada. In spite of her imperfections, it is still the “good land” that our Lord has provides for us and is worthy of our loyalty. We can also this day ask God’s blessing upon our King, and seek to serve, and obey him with devotion and good will.

On this Thanksgiving Sunday, may we express in a special way our gratitude for our dear Anglican Church. She is our spiritual mother, and has nourished us in our spiritual lives in so many ways as a good mother should. She is sometimes not all that she should be, but let us not abandon or forsake her, but love and cherish her.

May this be a truly Happy Thanksgiving for each of us! May

it be a day for reflection, repentance, renewal, and above all these things true Christian Gratitude!

Glory Be To God For All Things Amen!