 Gratitude is a Spiritual Discipline

Canadians celebrate Thanksgiving in October with a long weekend. It includes a delicious meal shared with loved ones and opportunities to spend time outdoors enjoying the colourful autumn leaves as they mark the changing of the seasons. For artists, like me, this time of year is glorious proof that God is the best artist.

Although the Thanksgiving holiday draws our attention to giving thanks, I am finding that my solitary daily practice of gratitude is a powerful spiritual discipline and an ongoing focus for giving thanks throughout the year. Every day, I do my own version of the Examen. The Daily Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God’s presence adapted from a technique described by Ignatius Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises. My version of the Examine begins most days when I get into my car in the morning to drive to work. The first thing I do is open myself to be more aware of God’s presence. I say thanks to God for being the most constant and loving presence in my life and for everything I have received.

**Questions For Reflection:**

What are the blessings you

have received recently?

How do you see yourself cultivating a discipline of gratitude?

How does your perspective change when you view

life through the lens of

gratitude?

Then I review with gratitude my awareness of God’s presence working through me during the previous day as well as looking at those times when I was not aware. And finally, I ask the Holy Spirit to work through me during the day helping me to see clearly and as much as possible through compassionate eyes. At night, I thank God and ask for a restful sleep in preparation for the next day.

Through my experience with the Examen, I am discovering that gratitude is a spiritual discipline that I can’t live without, and I have become more aware that at the heart of it is generosity. God the giver blesses me with gifts for which I

am thankful and which I, in turn, can share. By practicing the spiritual discipline of gratitude, year-round, all of us can participate in a continuous flow of love from God moving through us to others.

Happy Thanksgiving! | 

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