

GOSPEL MESSAGE

November 26, 2026

DAY OF THANKSGIVING (USA)

Cultivating Gratitude

Gratitude can be cultivated from a very early age. In some households, for example, everyone joins in a prayer of thanks before each meal. In others, caregivers expect children to share a handwritten thank-you note with anyone who gives them a birthday or Christmas gift. Maybe you remember sharing thank-you gifts with your teachers at the end of the school year, or making phone calls to distant relatives after a gift arrived in the mail. As reluctant as young people may be to participate in these practices, these actions all cultivate gratitude.

In recent years, it seems the field of popular psychology has caught up with what Christian communities have always known: Gratitude is good for us! Scientific studies show that when a person spends regular, concentrated time focusing on gratitude, their overall well-being improves. When we cultivate gratitude by writing thank-you notes or praying prayers of gratitude at the end of each day, for example, we train our minds and hearts to notice gifts of grace, love, and beauty around us. Especially on days when thankfulness doesn't come easily, it's important to work our gratitude "muscles" and lay the groundwork for personal resilience and spiritual growth.

In today's gospel reading, the healed man who turned around to thank Jesus is the one who cultivates gratitude. His witness is a model for us, inviting us to consider the moments in our own lives when we might offer praise to God in response to a gift we receive. Whether we experience healing in our bodies or minds, enjoy times with friends or loved ones, or simply recognize moments of joy or beauty as we go about our daily lives, we do well to cultivate gratitude and thank God for these gifts.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

Copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.