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# TRINITY NEWS

December 26, 2010

## Post-Christmas 2010

**W**hat shall I render unto the Lord for all of his benefits towards me? Psalm 116: 12

Give thanks in the first place for those who love you; and in particular for those who allow you to love them.

Give thanks for the freedoms that you enjoy in your life.

Give thanks for the limitations that are part of your journey. Give thanks for them because they make you realise that you are part of the suffering of the human family. Limitations also make us realise what we already have, blessings that abound if only we can see them.

Some people have the knack of making other people think better of themselves. That is an incredible gift. But this give can only be offered by someone who is already thankful about what they have become and what gifts they themselves bring to the table of life.

Giving thanks to God is an enormously freeing exercise. It is hard to give thanks to someone on earth without being in some little sense a bit manipulative. We are giving a gift in thanks to them. However, in a secret corner of our mind we may hope that they will give something back to us.

We are also hoping to bring about in some way a favourable attitude towards us. Perhaps they will see us as people who are generous of heart and that we care very much about them.

Buying a gift for God is like trying to buy a gift for Queen Elizabeth the Second. When someone has everything what do you give them? We also cannot change the open-handed generosity at the heart of God. It is there for all to receive.

The writer of the Psalm (116: 13-14) gives an answer:

I will lift up the cup of salvation in and call on the name of the Lord.

I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people

We lift up the cup of salvation in the Eucharist. It is not the cup that saves us but Christ himself. But the cup in the Eucharist is the symbol of his saving death of the Cross. The wine poured out is a tangible reminder of the lifeblood of Christ poured out for our salvation and as a symbol of the triumph of love in the world. That is, sacrificial love that knows only the benefits of lifting people up into the heart of God.

We call on the name of Lord in our life as followers of Christ. It is the name above every name that resounds in our prayers and in the revolving reflections of our days. It is a name that appears in the sounds of silence and at the hour of our death. It is a name that may be the last word that we speak, the name through which we pray to our heavenly Father. We can only do it "in the presence of all his people" when we come to worship God in community.

We can only do it "in the presence of all his people" when we come to worship God in community. Whether the person alongside us sings like gravel scraping on an enamel plate, or their perfume is overpowering or the child they have brought is doing acrobatics on the pew, we still have a channel of peace inside that connects with God as we share with others in worshipping the sovereign Lord. We bring the concerns and cares of the past week and our hopes and dreams for a better tomorrow to our loving God. There is something immensely collective and unifying in encountering the sovereign God in worship.

So we give thanks for all that is past in 2010. We look forward with hope to the New Year and in particular to the dreams and aspirations that we have before us.

**I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year  
Give me a light that I may tread safely out into the unknown  
and he replied: go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of  
God  
and that shall be better for you than light and safer than a known way -  
Louise Haskins**

**I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year**

Many traditions have someone standing at an open door that opens out into a vast new universe of being, filled with fresh dreams and hopes that are unsustained until now,

Christ described himself as "the door". He stands guard for us at the door of life.

He is there to protect us, to take our hand and lead us forward into the adventures of an unknown future. He will lead us to the unknown God, and make him the God who is known, the God who knows us and every tiny detail our life. Jesus describes this as God counting the hairs of our head.

**Give me a light that I may tread safely out into the unknown**

The little oil lamps of Palestine were hardly a light in the darkness. In the Australian bush we have hurricane lanterns, kerosene lamps that are portable. They light up a few metres around us. One night when I was out trapping rabbits in the pitch dark, the hurricane lamp blew out in the wind. Only the stars peeped down from the blue-blackvelvet sky. I headed for the homestead, but I really had no idea where I was going, because for an Australian bushman I have a very poor sense of direction. When I eventually saw the light of the homestead I felt a huge relief. Rabbits are trapped by marking in the dust back to where the last trap was set. We also point back to where we have been and to see where we have been. There will be a lot of markers for this past year



The man at the gate of the year replies:

**“Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God, and that shall be better for you than light and safer than a known way”.**

This is one of the great challenges of the Christian faith. It requires trust, and the constant dredging up of that trust. We bring all that we have learnt from life and we place our hand into the hand of God. The Hebrew word for hand is *yad*. It need means not only “hand” but also “institution”, “monument”, a “place a witness”. The memorial to the Holocaust in Jerusalem is called Yad Va Shem. That is, “Monument to the Name”, the name of God, Ha Shem and the countless names of those who suffered and died in the Holocaust.

That is, we go forward in hope and trust. We give thanks for all that we have and all that we will have on the journey. We give thanks for the achievements and the limitations and we give thanks for life itself. We put our hand into the hand of God, and a distant light draws closer. And like the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son, there is a figure in the light who runs towards us. He will recognise us instantly. May we recognise him because we have known him in this life in word and sacrament, in prayer and in worship and in our deepest moments and thus we know him now and at the end of the day.

**Bishop Arthur Jones post-Christmas 2010**

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**Your prayers are asked in our healing ministry for Diana Croyston, JPeter, Beryl Tanner, Ron Thoburn, Suzanne Jacobson, Cena Quiapos, Ron Jacob, Bonnie SyCip, Fidelia Matthews, Jovel Llagas, Ted Whale, Ema Duhaylongsod, Emerinciana Gatela, Amy Gonzales, Carrie Angus, Augusto Natividad, Avelina Collado, Eric Williamson, Sunny Cabanang, Jaqueline Acquiatan, Susan Dalmas, Carlyn-Fern Manning, Richard Kendall, Johnny Manning Jr, Valerie Jones, Fr. Barry Cumberland, Gloria Domingo, Katsi Araneta, Emilie Nauntofte, Marian Kermanshahchi, Rosaline Soulsby, Divinagracia Benitez, Les Vye-Parminter, Wilson Teh, Rey del Rosario, Jose Songco, Gitte Volk, Cecile Gutierrez.**

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