



# Christian Education

A series of Sermons and Occasional Papers  
From the clergy and members  
of Holy Trinity Church  
Forbes Park, Makati

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Title: "A Plug for Thankfulness."  
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## Readings for this Sunday:

Old Testament     Isaiah 5: 1-7  
Epistle             Philippians 3: 14-21  
Gospel             Matthew 21: 33-43

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This is our parish Thanksgiving Day, so I am going to give you something to be thankful for by delivering a very short sermon. But before you heave a sigh of relief, remember that Edison Yap has a Stewardship presentation today, too!

It is a custom in some families, whether they do so in November or October, to observe Thanksgiving Day by taking a moment before the traditional family dinner to think about what each person is thankful for. Each family member is expected to share one thing, however profound or simple it might be. The idea is that one articulates, actually shares out loud, his or her gratitude for something that they are currently grateful for. It makes it a bit more personal than

just sitting there planning one's first move in the attack on the roast turkey while someone else says the Grace!

One might think that sharing just one item sounds pretty small; after all, most people would agree that they are blessed- even those who aren't particularly happy at the moment are the recipients of God's care and providence. The truth is, though, that finding even one thing to be publicly thankful for is a great chore for many people. In most of the bible studies or prayer groups I have led, there are always requests for healing, or concern for those who travel or who are bereaved, or for those who have died, but very, very seldom does anyone say, "I want to share my gratitude to God for what He has done for me." It does happen, but not nearly often enough. Perhaps we're just shy. I hope that's the case, because I would hate to think that we are actually ungrateful.

For that reason, I would like to put in a plug, an advertisement, for our Prayers of the People every Sunday. When listing those who are sick, or traveling, or those who have died, give a thought to adding an item about something you're thankful for. It will help to balance out our list. The large number of requests for healing usually makes

it appear that our parish and its friends are prone to sickness! Let's give people the impression that we are just as prone to gratitude.

No, I'm not going to ask that we go around the church and have each person share his or her reason for being thankful. (But I might someday.) God is not subject to our human needs and wants, but He very much wants to know that we recognize what He has done for us. The formal name for our weekly Communion Service is the "Eucharist." That's Greek for Thanksgiving. It means that we cannot receive the gifts of God here at the altar without first gathering together and offering prayers of gratitude for what God has done for us in Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection, and for all the blessings, great and small, that we receive from Him.

That is as appropriate a sentiment as I can think of for this combination Harvest Thanksgiving and Stewardship Sunday. As the offertory sentence from the Prayer Book says, "Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the most high." (Psalm 50:14.)