



# Bringing Home the Word

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 9, 2016

## Coming Down With Gratefulness

By Janel Esker

**A**t the age of thirteen months, our daughter has begun saying, “Thank you!” OK—it sounds more like “tan-oo,” but being excellent baby-talk translators, we know what she means.

We didn’t teach her to say this. She “caught” it by overhearing it at day-care and at home. The question is, does she know what it means? Or does she just say “tan-oo” because it generates excitement from her proud parents?

## Sunday Readings

### 2 Kings 5:14–17

“He returned with his whole retinue to the man of God... ‘Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel. Please accept a gift from your servant.’”

### 2 Timothy 2:8–13

“If we have died with him we shall also live with him.”

### Luke 17:11–19

“‘Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.’”

The description of the Samaritan’s gratitude in today’s Gospel is dramatic: “He fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him.” This man’s life was profoundly changed—he’d been a social outcast as a leper, and now he could be restored to his community. It was a 180-degree transformation. His was not a rote recitation of the words. His thank-you was gratitude from the depths of his soul, and I imagine he maintained that gratitude throughout his new, changed life.

We know that saying thanks is the polite thing to do. We know we should regularly thank God for all we have. But have we “caught” the attitude of gratitude of that Samaritan—an attitude that reaches into the soul’s depths and lasts a lifetime? If you’ve survived cancer or a serious car accident, you probably know that kind of gratitude. But even those of us who haven’t experienced such a dramatic life change should exhibit that depth of thankfulness for the incredible gifts we’ve received, particularly the gift of Jesus Christ.

When was the last time you fell at the feet of Jesus and poured out your heart in thanks? †

*“He fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him.”*

## A Word From Pope Francis

[**The Christian heart**] is open, always. It is not, therefore, a heart that withdraws into its own selfishness. Nor is it a heart that sets limits, that counts: up to here, up to there. When you enter into this light of Jesus, when you enter into Jesus’ friendship, when you let the Holy Spirit guide you, your heart becomes open, magnanimous.

—Morning Meditation in the Chapel of the Domus Sanctae Marthae, January 28, 2016



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What has God given you today? Have you offered him a prayer of thanksgiving?
- How can you foster a spirit of gratefulness and thanksgiving in your home? What stifles it?



# God's Abundance and Our Response

By Ronald Rolheiser, OMI

**J**esus reveals to us a God who shocks us with lavishness, forgiveness, creativity—and abundant love. We are reminded of the lavishness and prodigality we see in nature, as created by God. For example, the sun that shines in the sky is prodigal. It's giving itself away in generosity. Scientists tell us that every second inside of the sun the equivalent of four million elephants are being transformed into light. Each second the sun is giving away millions and millions of kilowatts of energy that it will never get back. The sun is a great mother. It's giving itself away in utter lavishness every second. And when the sun stops doing that, this planet will become inert.

Consider the sign of the multiplication of the loaves as it is described in the Gospel of John. One day Jesus went up the mountain and sat down with a large crowd of 5,000 men, not counting women and children. The disciples came to Jesus and said, "The people are hungry. What should we do?" Jesus said, "Feed them yourselves."

There is a huge irony that John wants us to pick up here, and it's the key to the whole story. It's this: The disciples want to go and buy some food. But they are with the "bread of life." Jesus had

just declared: "I am the bread of life. If somebody comes to me, that person is never going to be hungry again." Now his very disciples and apostles want to go away from him and start buying food. Then Jesus asked, "What have you got?" They said, "We have five loaves and two fish." It was probably one person's lunch—five little buns and two tiny sardines. They said, "But we can't set that out for this huge crowd of people!" Jesus said, "Set it out." They set it out, and the 5,000-plus eat as much as they want and there is still a great abundance left over—twelve baskets full.

You don't set out five loaves and two fish before thousands of people. It's ridiculous—except if you are with the bread of life, then it is not ridiculous at all. It's all there. We simply have to trust in the overabundant and lavish love of God. †

Source: *Catholic Update*, June 2011

## Thanksgiving: It's What We Do All Year

By Kathleen M. Carroll

**A**ll people of faith have some element of praise and thanksgiving in their

spiritual practice. Devout Jews recite the Amidah—a prayer that begins with God's praises and concludes with thanksgiving—three times a day. Muslims pray five times a day to thank God. For Catholics, though, there is an even more intimate connection between our faith and gratitude. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes the Eucharist as "the source and summit of the Christian life" (CCC 1324).

The very word Eucharist is taken from the Greek word meaning "thanksgiving." The Church requires us to attend Mass at least weekly so that together we can fulfill our Lord's request: "Do this in memory of me." Our Liturgy of the Eucharist reminds us we are both a people of thanksgiving and a family in faith. And the best way to celebrate and give thanks together is with a shared meal. †

Source: A Thanksgiving edition of *Catholic Update*

*The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life."*



Lord, I am grateful for your healing presence. Help me to recognize your presence in my life with constant praise and gratitude.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,

Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

October 10–15

Mon. Weekday: Galatians 4:22–24, 26–27, 31—5:1 / Luke 11:29–32


Tue. Weekday: Galatians 5:1–6 / Luke 11:37–41

Wed. Weekday: Galatians 5:18–25 / Luke 11:42–46

Thu. Weekday: Ephesians 1:1–10 / Luke 11:47–54

Fri. Weekday: Ephesians 1:11–14 / Luke 12:1–7

Sat. St. Teresa of Jesus: Ephesians 1:15–23 / Luke 12:8–12

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