

## A Note from St. James' Pastoral Care September 2023, Season of Pentecost



Dear Friend,

Two questions to begin this Note with for you to ponder: first, are you a “glass half-full” or a “glass half-empty” sort of person? Second, have you ever wondered why we wish people “Good Morning!” when we meet them early in the day? In our day and age, “Good morning” is simply a conventional form of greeting, but - if you think about it - it’s really more like a wish or even an informal blessing. We are saying that we hope for a day in which all things are good for the person we are greeting. In many ways it’s similar to “Peace be with you”, the greeting that Jesus often used with His disciples. Now, we would never greet anyone with “Bad morning!” and yet we often begin the day for ourselves and those around us with just that sentiment. How? By letting the “glass half-empty” side of our nature get the upper hand. Forgive me if this seems overly simplistic, but we often seem able to rise to the occasion when a major event occurs; it’s the little, ordinary, everyday habits that trip us up!

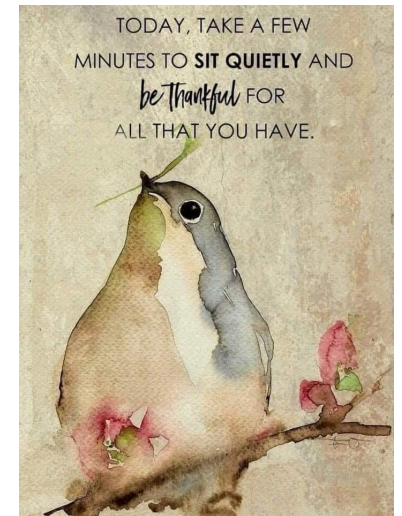
When I wake up in the morning, I may or may not feel well. If I am feeling rested, comfortable in body and calm in mind, then getting up in a cheerful mood is relatively easy - especially if the sun is shining as well. What if, on the other hand, I’ve had a poor night’s sleep, I ache or am very stiff, and I’m anxious or discouraged - and it’s a gloomy day besides? Particularly if I’m a “glass half-empty” sort of person, the whole day can go downhill from there, not only for me but for anyone else I encounter soon after. How can I try to wrench myself out of such a mood, especially before I infect others with it, too?

A verse in Psalm 118, verse 24, says “THIS IS THE DAY WHICH THE LORD HAS MADE; WE WILL REJOICE AND BE GLAD IN IT.”

Herbert O’Driscoll, beloved Anglican preacher, storyteller, author and hymn writer, in his 2008 book, “Prayer Among Friends”, suggests this verse as the first words to come out of your mouth each day when you awake. Praising God with these words about rejoicing and being glad, are, in effect, asking God to help us do this for the rest of our day. What a wonderful way to turn a “half-empty” or even “half-full” glass into a cup overflowing with joy! The verse can be easily memorized and repeated as a prayer anytime during the day when we need to raise our spirits, or those of others around us.

It’s simple, though not easy, but God can give us the strength to go on. Why not try it for the next few weeks and see? You just might be surprised!

Here are a month’s worth of Gospels, to take us past Thanksgiving and to mid-October:



<b>September 17</b>	<b>Matthew 18:-21-35</b>
<b>September 24</b>	<b>Matthew 20: 1-16</b>
<b>October 1</b>	<b>Matthew 21: 23-32</b>
<b>October 8</b>	<b>Harvest Thanksgiving Luke 17: 11-19</b>
<b>October 15</b>	<b>Matthew 22: 1-14</b>

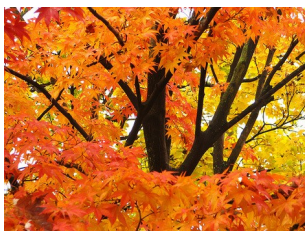
This month I'm only sharing one sonnet by Malcom Guite, another Anglican poet and priest whose writings I've brought you before, but this time with some of his opening remarks by way of explanation and insight:

There is no feast of Thanksgiving in either the British national or church calendars, but it seems to me a good thing for any nation to set aside a day for the gratitude which is in truth the root of every other virtue. So on American Thanksgiving, I am re-posting here an Englishman's act of thanksgiving.

I'm conscious that in amongst the thanks for 'mere survival' is lament and grief for those who have left this world in this last year. But lament itself can become part of thanksgiving for their lives.

### **THANKSGIVING**

Thanksgiving starts with thanks for mere survival,  
Just to have made it through another year  
With everyone still breathing. But we share  
So much beyond the outer roads we travel;  
Our interweavings on a deeper level,  
The modes of life embodied souls can share,  
The unguessed blessings of our being here,  
The warp and weft that no one can unravel.  
So I give thanks for our deep coinherence  
Inwoven in the web of God's own grace,  
Pulling us through the grave and gate of death.  
I thank him for the truth behind appearance,  
I thank him for his light in every face,  
I thank him for you all, with every breath.



I'm ending this Note with a prayer from St. Luke's Anglican Church, Calgary, which I think was written by Herbert O'Driscoll, and used in a Service on September 4, 2020, but which certainly fits the theme of Thanksgiving:

Most bountiful God,  
Who has given your people gifts beyond measure;  
Open our eyes to the glory of your creation,  
Open our hearts to the measure of your love,  
Open our minds to the infinity of your grace,  
That we may give as generously as we have been  
given, In Jesus Christ our Lord,  
Who with you and the Holy Spirit lives forever.  
Amen.

May you be thankful  
for each day which the  
good Lord gives you!  
(M.C.)

With Love and Prayers  
from your St. James'  
Parish Family



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