

Rejoice in the Lord

**By Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark**



Grateful people are happy people

November is often referred to as Gratitude Month. It's a time when we give thanks for all the blessings in our lives.

Especially during this time of pandemic, many of our sisters and brothers are struggling to find reasons to be grateful. Many will be unable to celebrate Thanksgiving in their homes with family and friends because of illness, social distancing or restrictions on travel. Let's be sure to pray for those who are less fortunate than we are, and let's help them every way we can—especially as we prepare for the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Our thanks go to the God who created us and who sustains us by his grace. We Christians believe that this God is a person who knows us individually and who cares about each one of us. When we give thanks to him, it is a very intimate and personal thing.

When possible, we Catholics celebrate the holy Eucharist (whose name comes from the Greek word for “thanksgiving”) on a daily or weekly basis, but on Thanksgiving Day we give special thanks to God for all his abundant blessings. That includes the gift of life itself, our parents and families, the love that we share with spouses and children, our friends, our freedom as citizens of the United States of America, our vocations as missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, our material possessions, our intellectual gifts and talents, and much, much more.

Gratitude is a powerful virtue. It opens our hearts to the healing power of God's grace. It helps us look beyond our own selfish wants and fears to the gifts we receive from others, and to the opportunities we have to share with others, and to return thanks to God for all that he has generously given to us.

St. Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of my religious congregation, the Redemptorists, once wrote about the encounter between a priest who was eager to learn more about the spiritual life and a beggar who was barefooted and in rags.

One day, the two happened to meet. The priest greeted the beggar saying, “Good day, my friend.”

The beggar responded, “Thank you, sir, for your kind wishes, but I do not recall ever having had a ‘bad’ day.”

“Then God has certainly given you a very happy life,” said the priest.

“That is very true, sir,” the beggar replied. “I have never been unhappy.”

When the priest asked how this could be true given the man’s wretched condition, the beggar said, “This is the reason: when I have nothing to eat, I give thanks to God; when it rains or snows, I bless God’s providence; when someone insults me, drives me away, or otherwise mistreats me, I give glory to God.”

The beggar continued, “I said I’ve never had an unhappy day, and it’s the truth, because I am accustomed to will unreservedly what God wills. Whatever happens to me, sweet or bitter, I gladly receive from his hands as what is best for me. Hence my unvarying happiness.”

St. Alphonsus told this story to admonish us. If a poor beggar can thank God despite all the hardships he must endure, shouldn’t we be able to do the same? Shouldn’t we have the faith and the courage to look beyond our own needs, wants and fears to the gifts we have received from God and from so many others? The poor and vulnerable have much to teach us, especially when they remind us to be grateful.

Grateful people are happy people. They don’t focus on their problems, but on their blessings. Their hearts are filled with love even when their stomachs (or their pockets) are empty.



Holidays can be hard times for people who are in poor health, homeless or who are experiencing emotional or financial difficulties. When we celebrate Thanksgiving this year, let’s say a word of thanks to God for all his blessings. Let’s say a prayer of thanksgiving for all the people who have shared their gifts with us. And let’s also say a prayer for all who are poor, homeless, hungry, or suffering from the devastating effects of COVID-19.

Let’s make Thanksgiving 2020 a moment of grace for all who have been blessed by God with abundant gifts, including family, friends, co-workers, strangers and even enemies.

Our prayers of thanksgiving have the power to bring us hope, healing and great joy. May we thank God always for his goodness to us!

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

+ Joseph W. Tobin, C.S.R.

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Archbishop of Newark

Statement of Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., Archbishop of Newark, on the Release of the Holy See's McCarrick Report

In response to the Holy See's publication of its report on former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Cardinal Joseph Tobin, C.Ss.R., Archbishop of Newark, issued the following statement:

Together with the global community of the Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Newark is studying the findings of this unprecedented and substantial report. We commend the leadership of Pope Francis and the Holy See in seeking to bring collective healing to victims of Theodore McCarrick and all those who have suffered because of clergy sexual abuse, while attempting to restore justice for the Catholic community that has been so grievously wounded by sexual abuse, abuse of power and the mishandling of allegations.

The Report represents a significant and powerful step forward in advancing accountability and transparency regarding sexual abuse. Beyond the victims themselves, failures by some leaders in the Catholic Church have wounded many including the families and loved ones of victims and the faithful. It is important to recognize that the Church has made progress in responding to clergy abuse by implementing and updating policies and programs to safeguard the faithful, especially the most vulnerable among us.

The Archdiocese of Newark hopes that the Report will provide insights that will help us to strengthen further our well-established programs aimed at protecting the faithful.

We remain united in our sympathy and support for all victims of sexual abuse and pray for healing and reconciliation within our Church.

To access the full report from the Holy See, visit www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2020-11/parolin-mccarrick-report-statement-secretariat-state-vatican.html.

To access information about the Department for the Protection of the Faithful in the Archdiocese of Newark, visit www.rcan.org/offices-and-ministries/child-youth-protection.

A Message from Pope Francis: Words of Challenge and Hope



The Christian life is above all a grateful response to a generous Father. Gratitude is a characteristic trait of the heart visited by the Holy Spirit; to obey God we must first remember his benefits. Whoever does not let those benefits fall into oblivion is oriented towards good virtue and to every work of justice.

God never asks without giving first. Never. He saves first, then asks for fidelity to his commandments, which are the "loving words of a father" to his children so they can journey on the right path through life.

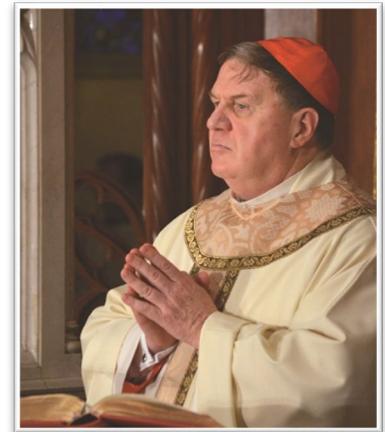
This is "the secret" to the Christian approach, which is Jesus' approach -- to know one is loved by a father and to love others in turn. Jesus doesn't start with himself, but with the father, he added.

Projects or efforts fail when they are rooted in selfishness, not in gratitude to the Lord.

My Prayer for You

During this Gratitude Month, let's pray together this simple prayer of thanksgiving (author unknown):

*O God, when I have food,
help me to remember the hungry;
When I have work,
help me to remember the jobless;
When I have a home,
help me to remember those who have no home at all;
When I am without pain,
help me to remember those who suffer,
And remembering,
help me to destroy my complacency;
bestir my compassion,
and be concerned enough to help;
By word and deed,
those who cry out for what we take for granted. Amen.*



Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark