

“O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever.”

Psalm 118:29

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

When the calendar turns to November each year, we often begin to think of the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday. American children have grown up hearing about the Plymouth Pilgrims sitting down to eat a meal with the Native American Indians in thanksgiving for a good harvest.

Most children upon receiving a birthday present or Christmas present from their parents are thankful. However, presents are not usually received every day and so children might sometimes forget how much their parents love them, in between receiving nice presents. Sometimes parents even need to correct their kids when they misbehave so that they will learn respect, good manners and obedience.

It's really the same thing in our relationship with God. When a new baby is born, a wedding takes place, when we celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Pascha and other joyous times like this, thankfulness to God is kindled in our hearts. Yet, when struggles come along, illness, financial hardships, difficulties with family relationships, it's easy to forget all the good things we've been given.

As St. John of Kronstadt once wrote:

☒ Thank God every day with your whole heart for having given to you life according to His image and likeness—an intelligently free and immortal life.

☒ Especially thank God for having restored and guided you again unto life eternal after you had fallen into eternal death, and for having done so not simply by the action of His omnipotence, for this would not have been in conformity to His justice, but by having given for our redemption His only begotten Son, Who suffered and died for us.

☒ Thank Him also for again daily bestowing life upon you, who have fallen an innumerable multitude of times, by your own free will, through sins, from life into death, and that He does so as soon as you only say from your whole heart: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee!”

☒ Thank Him also for often delivering you from sickness, you who imprudently throw yourself into danger and sickness, the precursors of bodily death, for correcting your faults, and for not depriving you of earthly life, knowing that it is dear to you, and that you are not yet ready for the future, eternal life.

☒ Thank Him for all your means of existence, for all the joys and sorrows of life; for everything is from Him, the All-merciful Father; everything comes from the First Origin of Life, Who has apportioned and lent life to all.

God bless you! In Christ,

+Fr. Gregory