

THIRD MODE OF PRAYER

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

First Part : Teachings, Reflections and Hints

Intent of this jottings on The Prayer of Thanksgiving:

- *To study the meaning and implications of ' thanksgiving '*
- *To realize that 'thanksgiving' is an attitude of the praying person.*
- *It has its roots in his mind and in his heart.*
- *To help people to cultivate the attitude of thanksgiving*
- *To lead the faithful through an experience of thanksgiving.*

What is Thanksgiving?

- It is the joyous acknowledgement of favors received from a **free person offered to us out of love.**
- We gratefully acknowledge that the giver acted out of benevolence towards us, not for any ulterior or selfish motive.
- We experienced being the 'object' of his love manifested and symbolized by his gifts and services.
- He offered his gifts or services to us without fettering our freedom. He left us free to accept or to refuse them.
- Free persons' give freely and the recipients have to receive freely also.
- That is why only 'free' persons can feel grateful to their donors and benefactors. No one will ever thank a cow for the milk she gives or a hen for the eggs she lays
- Animals will not thank us for feeding them.
- Guards and commissars in concentration camps will never thank the prisoners condemned to 'enforced labor' for the work they do
- Words and external manifestations of gratefulness and thanksgiving should be true signs of an inner attitude of gratefulness of our minds and hearts.
- A thankful person is ever 'aware' of the love and kindness of the giver; he lives in a state of 'perpetual appreciation' of his goodness and benevolence.
- Thanksgiving implies an acceptance' of the giver as a loving person.
- Thanksgiving 'affirms' the person of the giver. A thanksgiving message is always a 'you -count' message.

Implications of thanksgiving

A thanksgiving message implies that we are aware of:

- Our indigence and poverty.
- Our dependence on the giver.
- Our vulnerability.

Proud and 'self-sufficient' people are not grateful, they are haughty and puffed up.

They do not want to accept their poverty, indigence and dependence.

Gratefulness and Thanksgiving imply:

- Humility
- Truth
- Sincerity
- Acceptance of one's indigence and limitations.
- Gratefulness reminds us that the gifts received
 - Are not earned.
 - Nor can be demanded
 - Nor are they deserved
 - Cannot be taken for granted

Only the poor in spirit are truly grateful and thankful

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

- When our thanksgiving is directed to God, we call it prayer of thanksgiving
- Prayer of thanksgiving make us aware of our ontological' condition of:
 - Being a creature to his Creator.
 - A poor man towards his rich benefactor.
 - Dependent towards the absolutely independent.
 - A servant towards his master.
 - The indigent towards the self-sufficient.
 - The loved one towards the lover.
- Therefore, by the prayer of thanksgiving we openly profess that **God is our "Master", our "Creator", our 'Lover', our "Father", our "Sustainer", our 'ALL'.** *The "My God and my all" of Francis of Assisi*
- Any prayer worthy of its name has to remind us of our relationship to God. That is why all prayer worthy of its name explicitly or implicitly should contain gratefulness and thanksgiving. All prayer should lead us to acknowledge the love and generosity of God towards us.

- The proud, the self-conceited, those who think themselves to be ‘self-sufficient’, those who feel to be ‘their own masters’ cannot thank neither God nor their brothers and sisters.
- Those who do not want to feel ‘obliged’ to others, those who find it hard to ‘accept acceptance’, those who find it difficult to accept love’ from others, will find it hard to thank God and man.

True Thankfulness Towards our Brothers and Sisters Reminds us

- Of how much we owe to others.
- That we are inter-dependent’
- That all of us are indigent and needy.
- That we are vulnerable’
- That we complement each other.
- We need one another.
- That we ‘acknowledge’ the love others show us through their favors and gifts.
- That we ‘acknowledge’ their freedom.
- That we have neither claims nor rights to demand love or favors from others.
- That we should not take people for granted.
- That all of us are equals and have equal rights and needs.
- That whatever we are at this moment, we owe it both to God both and to others.
- That we are to help build one another.

God Expects Us To Be Thankful Both to Him and to Our Brothers and Sisters

- All we have and all we are, radically, we owe it to God as the original source of all being and goodness.
- All we have and are is a gift of God, our supreme benefactor.
- There is not a thing that, “by right,” belongs to us. Whatever we have is lent to us by God.
- God, however, in his providence, has communicated his gifts to us through the mediation of our brothers and sisters.
- People, are the mediators of God’s benefactions; life itself, has been mediated to us through our parents; education through our teachers; social life, security and a sense of belonging through human society.
- People are the channels God uses to keep pouring out his gifts into our laps!
- The gifts, radically, come from God, surely; yet, since people are ‘free’ persons; in a way, our brothers and sisters, have freely collaborated with God to pour them on us.

- They could have blocked God's prodigality and generosity and deprived us from God's gifts, yet, they didn't.
- People showed their love towards us by passing on to us the gifts of God.
- As partners of God's infinite love, freely, they have given us all we have; and made us, what we are!
- **Therefore, it is not enough to thank God for his gifts; we have to thank people also.**
- We have to show gratefulness and appreciation to one and all for what they did and do for us.

We have to foster in our hearts an attitude of deep thankfulness both, to God and to Man!

Consequently:

- **We have to thank, God and others for all the favors and gifts received!**
- Humbly and sincerely, we have equally to acknowledge our dependency from God and from our brothers and sisters.
- **The best way to give thanks to God for his gifts and presents is by directing our thanksgiving to Him through the channels he conferred them on us.**
- First, we have to show our thankfulness to men, then to God.
- **How can we thank God, whom we do not see, if we do not thank our brothers and sisters whom we see!**
- The test of our thankfulness to God is our thankfulness to our brothers and sisters.
- **If we do not feel grateful towards our brothers and sisters, we try to bluff God when we say "thank you "to Him!**
- The expression 'Thank you' as a manifestation of our sincere gratefulness to all, should for ever be on our lips.
- **We have to thank the poor and the rich, the pleasant and the unpleasant people, bosses and subordinates, the old and the young, our pupils and our teachers, our relations and those alien to us, friends and enemies; in other words, to one and all, God and man!**
- Whenever we show gratefulness to man, we render ourselves capable of thanking God.
- **The day we shall be able to say an honest 'Thank You' to all men, that day we shall be able to say 'Thank You, God'!**

Any manifestation of thanksgiving to anyone implicitly is a prayer of 'thanksgiving' to God