

Thanksgiving Day

For what do we have to be thankful?

During the tense days of the Second World War many of our Hollywood stars, both men and women, gave generously of their time and talent to assist and to entertain our servicemen here and abroad. We know, for one, that Elsa Lanchester, British-born actress, frequently gave informal parties for servicemen in her Los Angeles apartment. As each of her guests was about to leave, she asked him to write his name and address in her Servicemen's Book, as she called it.

Toward the end of each party this charming lady of the screen would address her guests in a tone that showed unquestioning trust in God. She assured them: "I promise each one of you who will write his name in my book that I will pray constantly for your safe return. God will watch over you."

As the months rolled into years, a number of these soldiers, sailors, and marines returned. Many made it a point to stop and say sincerely, "Thank you, Miss Lanchester," before they took train for home. After their departure the actress would take out her Servicemen's Book, find the name of the one who had returned safe, and check it by writing beneath the boy's name the words, "Thank you, God."

She wanted to thank God for each safe return. She did it thoroughly and efficiently. She wanted to be sure that thanks were rendered in every case. She even wrote it down.

It would be a fine idea for every one of us to have a book like that, a book in which we could write the countless blessings we have received, a book where we could write beside each blessing, "Thank You, God."

Such a procedure may seem prosaic and mechanical, yet it is much better than the opposite-never thanking God at all. If the plan would help us to be more grateful-let's try it. Try writing down the gifts God has bestowed on you today, yesterday, all last year. And then say, "Thank You, God," or write it down beside each benefit for which you should be grateful.

Let's make a start:

Thank You, God that I can see. There are thousands who cannot see. For them there is no sunrise or sunset; no autumn colors, no rainbow tinted flowers, no movies, no delights of the eye.

Thank You, God that I can hear. There are thousands who cannot hear the voice of their own mother, nor the singing of the birds, nor a symphony, nor the laughter of children.

Thank You, God that I can walk. I know thousands who can't take a single step, thousands who are confined to a bed or wheel chair, other thousands of men who lost their legs in a war-who spend their years in I helpless dependence on the wavering kindness of others.

Thank You, God that I can work. Look at the many who can do nothing with brain or brawn or hands.

Thank You, God that I have something to eat. Millions as good as I, maybe better, have little or nothing to eat. Thousands are dying of hunger while I sit down to a

Thanksgiving feast. Thank You, God, for the bumper crops of 2003. Our vast country could feed the world. In the breadbasket of America-Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska, there are mountains of golden wheat and pyramids of golden corn, Your gifts. Help us, O God to get this food, Your food, to Your hungry children.

Thank You, God, for my Catholic Faith, which teaches me to be thankful. Thank You, God, for freedom to worship You as You wish to be worshipped. Thank You for our beautiful churches, our faithful priests, our comfortable Catholic homes.

Thank You, God, for the privilege of attending Holy Mass and receiving Holy Communion. Thank You for all the sacraments and for the life of grace in my soul.

Thanks for the trees and thanks for the birds; thanks for a drink of refreshing water; thanks for the open roads and thanks for our Churches where I can stop and visit You; thanks for that meal and thanks for that restful sleep; thanks for friends and thanks for the roof over my head; thanks for the chance to do Your work and thanks for Your generous rewards; thanks for the wine and thanks for the wheat and thanks for the Body and Blood of Your Son; thanks for the urge and chance to pray and thanks for the pains You permit; thanks for the opportunity to learn all about You, from our Catholic papers, from pamphlets, from magazines and books.

No book or library of books is large enough to record Your blessings and Your gifts. Where can I find the pen or the power or the eloquence or the words or the

endurance to thank You, God, for all Your gifts? They are without limit.

Every leaf and every star is a gift. Every kernel of corn and every shaft of wheat and every drop of rain and every blade of grass is a gift. How can I ever thank You for it all?

Your gifts are without limit. My thanks must be without limit. How can I render infinite, limitless thanks?

Holy Mass is an infinite prayer and sacrifice of thanks, a limitless act of gratitude. I will offer Holy Mass; I will attend Holy Mass, especially on Thanksgiving Day. That is how I will say again and again:

"Thank You, God, thank You." Amen.

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"One act of thanksgiving,
when things go wrong with us,
is worth a thousand thanks when
things are agreeable to our inclinations."
Bl. John of Avila. (16th cent.)

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Pamphlet 254