



Bishop's Meditation

by Bishop Porter Taylor

The Faithful Perspective of Thanksgiving

Thanks

by W. S. Merwin

Listen

with the night falling we are saying thank you
we are stopping on the bridges to bow from the railings
we are running out of the glass rooms
with our mouths full of food to look at the sky
and say thank you
we are standing by the water thanking it
standing by the windows looking out
in our directions

back from a series of hospitals back from a mugging
after funerals we are saying thank you
after the news of the dead
whether or not we knew them we are saying thank you

over telephones we are saying thank you
in doorways and in the backs of cars and in elevators
remembering wars and the police at the door
and the beatings on stairs we are saying thank you
in the banks we are saying thank you
in the faces of the officials and the rich
and of all who will never change
we go on saying thank you thank you

with the animals dying around us
taking our feelings we are saying thank you
with the forests falling faster than the minutes
of our lives we are saying thank you
with the words going out like cells of a brain
with the cities growing over us
we are saying thank you faster and faster
with nobody listening we are saying thank you
thank you we are saying and waving
dark though it is.

There's a reason we call the second half of the Eucharist "The Great Thanksgiving." We come to receive the sacraments from a position of thanks because we recognize that all of life is a gift. "All things come from Thee O Lord and of Thine own have we given Thee." All things. The Great Thanksgiving isn't merely a section of the liturgy; it's a stance or a perspective we are invited to take in order to focus ourselves on

God and not ourselves nor those we may wish to blame for the current condition. Joanna Macy, the co-author of *Active Hope*, writes, “Gratitude pulls us out of this rat race. It shifts our attention from what’s missing to what’s there.”

“This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it,” because this day is the only day we have to be alive. More importantly we are alive. Giving thanks is not a means of avoiding the issues of the world. Giving thanks gives us the faithful perspective to address those issues because we remember everything is not up to us. God is always the key player. When we give thanks, we change our orientation and realize our job is to align ourselves with God’s movement.

It’s not that we ignore the hurts and pains and inequities and divisions in the world. It’s that we don’t let those define how we see the world or ourselves or God’s grace. Thanksgiving gives us a glimpse into what the world could be and is designed to be. Our gratitude for what we have received or experienced is the catalyst for realizing that everyone deserves abundant life. Instead of thinking we are special, we see that everyone is special because every person is a child of God.

So, this week and every week, let us give thanks and cultivate a practice of thanksgiving. If Joanna Macy is correct, it’s the first step toward participating in the divine movement of changing the world.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Bishop Porter

FOR CHRIST. FOR THIS TIME. FOR ALL TIME.

