

November 4, 2010

Thanks for the memories.....

During this month of November when our hearts and minds are drawn to our American celebration of Thanksgiving, it's great to stop and recognize all for which we can give thanks! Bob Hope used to close his act with the song, "Thanks for the Memories." I thank God as I look back at some of what I've experienced in this past year—that I'm now on the other side of it. Many of you understand that! God is good all the time, and all the time God is good! Even when we fail to recognize His blessings, our hearts can be filled with thanksgiving. Several years ago Rich Bimler came to an anniversary celebration in my former parish and he helped the congregation memorize a wonderful Scripture from Psalm 126, ***"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."*** What a great verse to memorize!

Reflecting back over the past year, how many things have you encountered, things that at the time frustrated you or caused stress, in which now you can rejoice? If you haven't gotten there yet, trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In other words, don't give up, 'cause God isn't finished yet! He wants us to rejoice with thankful hearts in all His blessings to us. In fact, the Apostle Paul reminds us, ***"Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again, rejoice!"*** An attitude of gratitude goes a long way in reaching the world for Jesus!

I started thinking of some of the things for which I'm most thankful. I'm thankful for a Savior who loves me despite how I let Him down. I'm thankful for His forgiveness that covers over my sin. I'm thankful for His grace that is new every morning, for His Word and Sacraments which strengthen my faith. I'm thankful for my family—for a wife who loves and supports me—not to mention who now lives with me... I'm thankful for my sons who have grown up so quickly and make me so proud. I'm thankful for the Lord's call, which I still question from time to time, but which He confirms again and again. I'm thankful for a

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dedicated staff in the District Office that supports each other and me, and teaches me about servant leadership.

I also just want to take a few moments to say thank you to all of you. Thank you for your service on behalf of our Lord Jesus, whether in a parish as a pastor, teacher, DCE, administrator, or other professional church workers, or those who serve in leadership positions within a congregation. You are a blessing to so many, and fill many hearts and lives with the joy of the Lord. In one of my favorite lines from an old familiar movie called [It's a Wonderful Life](#), Clarence, the Angel, says, "*Strange isn't it? Each man's life touches so many other lives. When he isn't around he leaves an awful hole doesn't he?*" I'm thankful for the way that God is using you to impact so many other people—some of which you are aware, many of which you'll never even know!

We all have so much for which we can be thankful. We just need to stop and take the time to celebrate all the blessings God has placed in our lives. What, or who, is it for which you're most thankful? Take a few moments and jot down some of the things for which you can give thanks! And in those moments when life overwhelms you, pull out that list and give thanks to God with a grateful heart!

Peace in Jesus,

Greg

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