

Pastor Geoffrey R. Boyle  
Thanksgiving Eve  
22 November 2017  
Lk 17:11-19

*In the name of the Father, and of the T Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

In the Lord's Prayer we ask,

*"Give us this day our daily bread."*

And our Catechism explains,

*"God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayer, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving."*

Really, that's what today's about:

recognizing that *who we are* and *what we have* comes to us as a gift from another.

Particularly in America that's easy to forget.

We work hard to put food on the table and a roof over our children's head.

If we kick up our feet on a Sunday afternoon it's because we know the week we've had,  
and that it's about to start all over again.

We don't like government handouts

and when someone offers us charity we're sometimes ashamed.

You get what you pay for; you reap what you sow.

And at the end of the day, you can see what you've done.

There's very little room for *gift* in that sort of world.

And where there's no *gift*, there's no *thanksgiving*.

And where there's no thanksgiving, there's only pride or despair—you either make it, or you don't.

So when we pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread*,"

we're to *realize* that God gives daily bread to all—no matter who you are.

That is, what's on the table isn't just the fruit of *your* labor;

it's the gift that **God** has prepared and given—

it's what came from the seed sprouting and giving life;

it's the rain that fell and watered the earth;

it's the farmer that tilled the soil and harvested the wheat and milled the grain;

it's the truck driver, spending another week away from his family, transporting the grain,

it's the company that mixed it, baked it, packaged it and delivered it to the local store,

it's the teenager who stocked it on the shelf and put up with you while you were in a rush—

and in all of this, it was **our Heavenly Father** orchestrating all things,

to provide what you need to support this body and life.

So we pray, "*Give us this day our daily bread*," because we need to *recognize* this...and we often don't.

But lest we think that *daily bread* is just about...well, *bread*...our Catechism goes on:

*"Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like."*

Take away our “*daily bread*”—namely,  
 the air we breathe,  
 the water we drink,  
 the food we eat,  
 the homes that shelter us,  
 the government that protects us—  
 and we die.

And those are the necessities!

Take away our “*daily bread*”—namely,  
 the wine we drink,  
 the pumpkin-spiced latte we splurge on,  
 the remote-controlled cars we crash through the halls,  
 the concert tickets we’ve got for next month,  
 and the lazy-boy waiting for us after a huge Thanksgiving meal—  
 and we suffer a lack of joy, a life without life, so we think.

The reality is: God gives us not just what we need to support this body and life,  
 but He also gives us so many things that bring joy to the life we have.

And He doesn’t just do this for Christians.

In fact, as the Catechism says, “*even for all evil people.*”

“*He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good,  
 and sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.*” (Mt 5:45)

Or as we pray in the common table prayer,

“*The eyes of all look to You, O Lord, and You give them their food at the proper time.  
 You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.*” (Ps 145:15-16)

And in today’s Gospel of the 10 Lepers,

He doesn’t first ask what they believe before He heals them,  
 He simply sends all 10 on their way, cleansed.

The gifts come to *all*.

But not all recognize the gift, or the gift-giver.

Not all live lives marked by thanksgiving and joy.

Many struggle through this life thinking that everything hinges on them—  
 what they do or don’t do, what they achieve or don’t achieve.

So far, we’ve just been talking about what we sometimes call *First Article gifts*:

the things that the Father provides for His creation—  
 and these are the things that America ought to give thanks for tomorrow.

But the Church gathers in thanksgiving because She knows the Father’s greatest gift to His creation.

And it’s not the rain or sunshine, the government that protects us or the air we breathe,  
 or even, literally, our *daily bread*—

“*for man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God.*”

The gift for which the Church gathers to give thanks, is the gift of Her redemption in Christ Jesus.

The gift of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

And it's no wonder that this gift is given to us in what we sometimes called *the Eucharist*—  
that is, the *Thanksgiving*.

This is our true, daily bread—  
that bread, alone, that forgives our sin and unites us together with God in Christ.

When we recognize *this*—  
namely, that all we have is a gift, in this life and the next, given by our Heavenly Father;  
and that all these gifts are ours in abundance in Christ Jesus,  
even when we suffer a life where they're scarce—  
then our thanksgiving to God can overflow with love and joy to our neighbor in need.

It's always troubles me to see that line in the Catechism, "*God gives daily bread to all.*"  
We all know there are many who go without daily bread,  
who are hungry and homeless and appear unprotected in this life.

Perhaps by praying for *daily bread*, and recognizing God as giver,  
we could also see that He gives us daily bread not just for our needs, but those of others.  
By praying for daily bread, we're also asking God to use us to deliver this bread to those in need.

In this way, we are given to share in the gift-giving.  
And how could one share in Christ, without sharing the gifts He comes to give?  
As you have received freely, so freely give—and do it all in thanksgiving to God.

*In the name of the Father, and of the T Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*