

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE
ASCENSION SUNDAY, MAY 13, 2018

On this beautiful morning, we pray. We are accustomed to praying for our clergy, near and far. We are accustomed to praying for all those around the world, in our country, and in our local community, who are experiencing tragedy. The current flooding in BC is the worst in over a hundred years, with thousands of lives affected, and many people have had their daily lives ripped apart. Crises and problems rise and fall with regularity in our personal lives, in our families and with our friends. We pray for all those too. We pray for our church, and all those who serve within it. We pray for mercy, for solutions, for healing, for love, for hope and for peace. We are accustomed to praying for these things, for ourselves, and for others. We say "O Merciful God, Hear Our Prayers".

On this beautiful morning, let's also pray our gratitude for the world God gave us. In Ann Voskamp's book, *One Thousand Gifts*, she realizes that this is where God is – in the present. In the Now. She realizes this as she works to find all the gifts in her harried life, as she remembers that "with an expiration of less than twelve hours, what does Jesus count as all most important? In Luke 22:19 NIV, it says:

"And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them..." In the original language, "he gave thanks" reads "eucharisteo".

The root word is *charis*, meaning "grace". There is the Greek word "chara" meaning "joy". *Euchristeo* means "thanksgiving". Augustine said that in the quest for more "Without exception...all try hardest to reach the same goal, that is joy." (page 32)

So as Ann does in her book, let's enter into God, by searching for our gifts and praying our gratitude. Yesterday came the joy of greeting my puppy at the groomer's and touching his smooth, beautiful, black brushed velvet coat. It was seeing the blue sapphire of False Narrows as I drive around the island. It came as I ate a 3 berry scone from Slow Rise Bakery. It was the creamy white long stemmed rose I left at my father's interment marker May 1st. These are gifts I have been given. Joy I have received. As the rabbis say "Blessings keep our awareness of life's holy potential ever present. They awaken us to our lives."

So together, now, let us pray our gratitude for gifts we have been given. Let us take a moment to find them in our daily lives and share them with each other, or in silence. Let us imagine if we could ever get up to one thousand!

Sharing.....and thank you.

Continuing from the rabbis:

“With each blessing uttered we extend the boundaries of the sacred and ritualize our love of life. One hundred times a day, everywhere we turn, everything we touch, everyone we see. The blessings can be whispered. No one need ever hear. No one but the Holy One. *“Holy One of blessing, Your Presence fills the Universe. Your presence fills me.”*

Let us live eucharisteo, O bountiful God, in your grace.

Paddy Waymark,
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