

An Attitude of Gratitude



By Stephanie Harakal

Good Morning Lord! It's a beautiful day today. Thank you. I had a good night's sleep last night. Thank you. My arthritis isn't bothering me this morning. Thank you. My family continues to be free of Covid-19. Thank you. We have plenty of food to eat. Thank you. Each morning, I try to come up with at least five (5) things to be grateful for. It reminds me that I am not in charge, God is, and begins my days in a positive way and I am grateful for all my blessings.

One of these blessings is an ability to work with technology. Thanks to technology, I receive daily reflections from Dynamic Catholic and Gospel Reflections from Notre Dame. Technology enables me to meet with a group led by the Legion of Mary Auxiliary from St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Farmingdale, NJ to pray the Rosary together using Zoom. In addition to the Rosary, the ability to see and talk to others from the parish is a definite plus during this pandemic. And if I want company as I say the Rosary on other days, I can go to <http://ComePraytheRosary.org> or another of the many online rosaries or I can listen to Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M., Bishop of the Diocese of Trenton, praying the Luminous Mysteries with students of St. Paul School in Princeton NJ (<https://soundcloud.com/diocese-of-trenton/bishop-david-m-oconnell-cm-the-luminous-mysteries>).

I try to say a Rosary daily and since I made this commitment, there have been many days when I need Mary's help in fitting it into my day and I am grateful that she always comes through for me. Matthew Kelly, the founder of Dynamic Catholic, reminds us that Gratitude is the fruit/gift of the third decade of the Joyful mysteries of the Rosary, the Birth of Jesus (*Rediscover the Rosary*, pp 61 & 71).

Reminders to be grateful abound. On a sign for the First Baptist Church in Hope Valley Rhode Island is the message *Count Blessings, Not Problems*. Parishioners of St. Catharine Parish in Holmdel NJ responded with gratitude when they were able to hold their summer religious ed program via virtual reality using the Catholic Brain program (*The Monitor*, July 2020, p 60). In the same issue, on p 49, an ad for a funeral home includes a graphic with the caption *Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates vision for tomorrow*.

Debbie Macomber, in her book *One Simple Act: Discovering the Power of Generosity*, makes the point that generosity benefits the giver, rewarding him or her with physical and psychological rewards. Jesus said "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." – Matthew 11:28-30. My wish for you is to continue to give thanks and be grateful for all the blessings in your life. Be safe, be well, God bless.



Stephanie Harakal, Ed.D. is a parishioner of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Farmingdale NJ where she is a Minister of Holy Communion, a Reader at daily Mass, on a counting team, a long-time member and former president of the Rosary Altar Society, a Legion of Mary Auxiliary member, and the webmaster for St. Catherine's. She is also the webmaster for the Catholic Women of Zion. Married to her husband, John, for 58 years, she is the mother of six, grandmother of fifteen, and great-grandmother of nine.