

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, October 9, 2022
28th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle C

There is a legend of a man who found the barn where Satan kept his seeds ready to be sown in the human heart. On finding the seeds of discouragement more numerous than any other seeds, the man learned that those seeds could be made to grow almost anywhere. When Satan was questioned, he reluctantly admitted that there was one place or ground in which the seeds of discouragement never grow. The man asked, "And where is that?" Satan replied sadly, "In the heart of a grateful person."

According to William Law, we all have the ability to work miracles for ourselves, not just in extraordinary moments but every day, that is if we have a grateful spirit – if we are filled with gratitude. Because a grateful spirit heals with a kind word spoken and turns everything that it touches into happiness.

Gratitude or gratefulness does a big job in us and in our hearts. And it is one of the best ways that God infuses happiness and joy, tenacity and resilience, strength of character into the daily struggle of life. Gratefulness is a quality most becoming of a child of God. By the same token, there is probably nothing that makes a person more unattractive than the absence of a grateful spirit. Needless to say, it is most unbecoming of a child of God.

It is said that in every circumstance that comes our way, we can choose to respond in one of two ways: we can whine or we can worship! And we cannot worship without giving thanks. It is just impossible.

When we choose the pathway of worship and giving thanks, especially in the midst of difficult circumstances, there is a beauty, a fragrance, a radiance that comes forth out of our lives to bless the Lord and others. We are blessed and we bless others.

On the other hand, when we give in to shining, murmuring, grumbling and complaining, we end up on a destructive path that ultimately leads to bitterness and resentment. We feel diminished and we try to diminish others.

Life is difficult. That is a fact. Life is made of a series of difficult problems to be solved.

- Spouses are burdened with both necessary and unnecessary crosses.
- Families are distressed by financial problems.
- Siblings are quarrelling and not getting reconciled.

Life hurts – perhaps due to a difficult child, a broken relationship, a frustrating job, a sleep problem, a serious medical issue, a long-drawn-out divorce, a lingering sin habit. Big. Small. Long-term. Everyday. There are so many things about our individual life experiences that occupy our thoughts, spoil our feelings, feed our fears, and add to our worries. We try everything we can think of to deal with those things.

- We blame the people who cause us the most pain and grief in life.
- We sink into escape patterns, just trying not to think of them.
- We pour ourselves into our work in an attempt to avoid dealing with more important things.

But most likely, no matter how we try to cope with hardship and difficulty, disappointment and discouragement, underneath it all is the heart's cry that keeps so many of us from deeply experiencing and appreciating God's best in our situations.

What can really help us – not just to cope with the seemingly negative things in life but to grow from them – is a profound sense of gratitude. True, Christ-centered, grace-motivated gratitude fits everywhere, even in life's most desperate moments and difficult situations. Even when there are no 'answers' to life's painful questions, gratitude gives hope and causes joy.

Gratitude transforms overwhelmed strugglers into triumphant conquerors. (Nancy Leigh DeMoss)

St. Paul, in his Second Letter to the Thessalonians, tells us, "In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."