



The Virtue Chronicles



Gratitude

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Brianna Zonneveld

The Banquet of the Virtues

A Sermon for the 13th Sunday after Pentecost

"He fell on his face before His feet, giving thanks."

One day, so says an old legend, God gave a banquet for all of his servants, and a really grand feast it was. All the virtues came and had a fine time. Humility was there sitting in the lowest place at the table. Charity was cutting the meat without rationing it. Patience was there and didn't mind at all being served last. Faith and Hope sat together. Everyone was having a wonderful time.

At the height of the banquet Charity noticed that two of the virtues were strangers to each other. He was surprised because he thought they were always together and he had purposely placed them side by side for just that reason. He came down to them and asked each one whether she had met her partner before. When they said that they had not, Charity introduced them:

"Kindness, I want you to meet Gratitude."

Both the virtues were so surprised to find out who the other was. Kindness said to Gratitude:

"We are supposed to be always together. Where one of us is the other should be, but when men receive kindness they don't give gratitude. Isn't it a pity that we have never really met before?"

It is a pity, a great pity, that kindness and gratitude so seldom meet. But it is true. This morning's Gospel gives us an example of it. To make it worse some of the most ungrateful people in the world are children. No matter what is done for them, some children are not grateful. From the day they are born they are always receiving

kindnesses. Every minute of the day someone is doing something for them. It was probably children that Kindness had in mind when she said to Gratitude:

“We are supposed to be together. Where one is the other should be, but when men receive kindness they very seldom show gratitude. Isn’t it a pity that we have never met before?”

Gratitude is a habit which every one should learn. It means that we appreciate things that are done for us and do not take them for granted. When something is done for us which we have no right to expect, the least we can do is say, “Thank you.” The lepers in the Gospel had no right to be cured, and yet only one of them was gentleman enough to be grateful.

We can tell whether we have the habit of gratitude or not by checking up on our prayers. Do we ever offer prayers of thanksgiving, or are all our prayers asking for something?

There were two angels in heaven who worked in the prayer department. One poor angel worked overtime. Prayers were coming through on his wire every second. The other angel just sat around playing his harp. Once in a great while a prayer would come through on his wire.

The first angel asked him, “Why is it I have to work so hard and you have almost nothing to do?”

The second angel replied, “That isn’t my fault. It’s the fault of people on earth. You see, you have charge of all the ‘Gimme’ prayers and I have charge of the ‘Thank you’ ones.”

“No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks.” ~ St. Ambrose

King Alphonsus and the Beggar

There was once in Arragon a very pious King called Alphonsus. This King saw that most of the young princes who dwelt in his Palace were very worldly, and seldom, if ever, thought of prayer or of thanking God for the benefits they were daily receiving from Him.

One day he thought he would give them a lesson. He prepared a great banquet, and invited them all to come to it. As soon as they were assembled, he gave a sign to begin the meal. Not one of them thought of making the Sign of the Cross, or of asking a blessing on their food before they began. In the midst of the enjoyment of the feast the door of the hall suddenly opened, and a beggar came in. He was covered with rags, and his whole appearance showed that he belonged to the lowest class of society.

Without saying a word, or even asking permission, he sat down amongst the nobles, not far from the King, and began to eat and drink as if he had as much right to be there as the others had.

All the young nobles were full of indignation at such conduct, and looked towards the King, wondering why he did not at once give orders that the intruder should be cast forth from the hall. But the King sat there in silence.

When the beggar had eaten and drunk as much as he could, he rose up, and without as much as looking at the King, or thanking him for the food he had received, turned towards the door and disappeared.

As soon as he had gone, a murmur of disgust broke forth among the guests. "What impertinence!" they cried out; "a miserable man like him to dare to come in here, and to eat and drink at the King's table, as if all belonged to him, and to go away without saying even one word of thanks!" And for some time they continued to speak in the same strain of what had just occurred.

At length the King rose up and said: "My friends, you are wondering among yourselves why I permitted that poor man to remain in the room, and you are indignant at his conduct. It was by my orders he came here. I wanted to give you a lesson. You speak of his impudence and his ingratitude and his rudeness. But you yourselves are as guilty as he, and even more so. Do you not daily receive from your Father in Heaven marks of His bounty and His love for you, and do you ever think of giving Him thanks? Let this be for you, then, a lesson. For the time to come, be grateful to Him, and never let a single day pass without thanking Him for the blessings He has bestowed upon you."

They bore the King's rebuke in silence, for they saw it was well deserved, and they profited by the lesson they had received.

My child, perhaps you feel that you also have neglected to thank your Heavenly Father for the graces He has given you, but for the future you will be more careful. The more grateful you are, the more you will receive from Him.

O give thanks to the Lord, because he is
good: because his mercy endureth for ever
and ever. ~ Daniel 3:89

Word Search

J D I R F K F T Y J R D P G R
G J E K G D G K T K R Y D J V
K S E U T R I V L H R I K F G
H U L R I D C H I L D R E N D
K R Y I B A N Q U E T D K G F
D Y T H A N K S G I V I N G G
J K R Y H D J R N R J C F K D
H R K G D V A J U R L G F U S
P L E G J T D R J D J K I S S
J R Y L I R E K U B E R E G L
R I A T H E U B D H R N J N S
J G U Y U D Y H R H D D E I F
J D R J E D D Y R N J F D S S
E H E R S R H R I L G D F S S
K R I F D K S K M D H F E E K
K G R T K T H I G I F D H L S
J T I G U K F K F S F I H B D

WORD BANK

Banquet Virtues Gratitude Kindness
Children Habit Thanksgiving Prayers
Duty Rudeness Guilty Rebuke
Blessings

Delicious Food on a Filthy Plate

There was once a young man who had the bad habit of committing sins against holy purity. From the days of his childhood he had always honoured the most holy Mother of God as his pious mother had taught him to do; and although he was living in the state of sin, he every day said some prayers in her honour.

One night he had a strange dream. He dreamed that he had gone out to walk in a forest, and that he had lost his way. He wandered about for a long time looking for the path, but in vain. Soon he began to feel the pangs of hunger, and he looked on all sides for something to eat, but found nothing.

Suddenly there appeared before him a beautiful lady surrounded with a heavenly light, and accompanied by an escort of virgins clad in white.

This lady went up to him and placed before him the most delicious food that he had ever seen, but on a dish which was exceedingly filthy, and covered with worms. The sight of the dish filled him with disgust, and although he was almost dying of hunger, he could not bring himself to taste the tempting food which was upon the plate.

The lady said to him: "Take and eat this delicious food I have brought you."

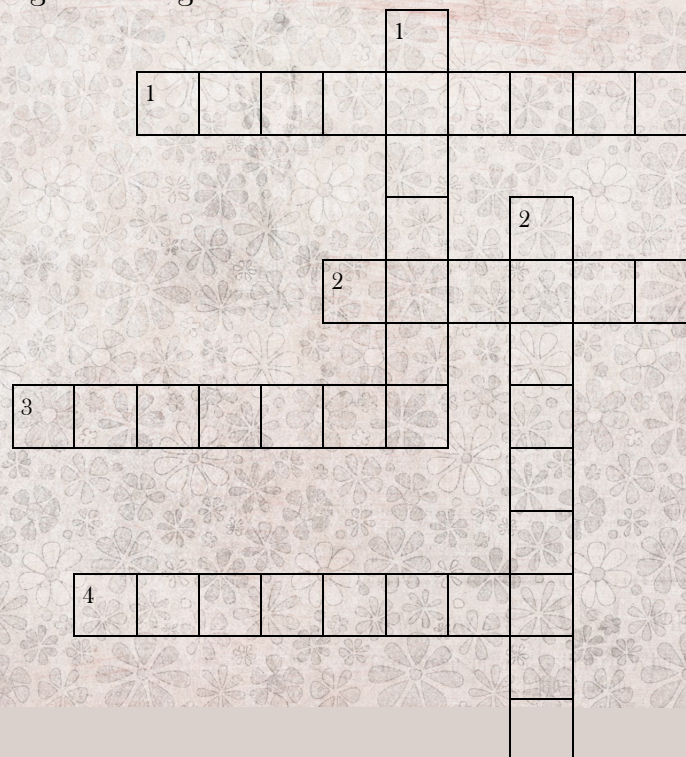
"Oh, how willingly I would eat of it?" he answered, "because I am so hungry and the food is so tempting, but I cannot eat it out of that loathsome dish!"

The lady - (it was the Blessed Virgin herself) - then said: "The prayers which you say in my honour every day are indeed beautiful in themselves, but your heart is so impure. How can you expect that I can receive with love prayers from a soul that is steeped in the filth of sin?"

Having said these words, she disappeared, and the young man awoke.

"Ah!" he said, "my soul is indeed black and filthy on account of the sins I have committed, but from this hour I will change my life and never sin again."

He kept his word. Having washed away his sins in the Sacrament of Penance, he began a new life, and persevered in it till he died. During his whole life he was ever grateful to his Mother in Heaven for the timely warning she had given him.



Across:

1. The virtue discussed in this newsletter.
2. The nobles knew they were _____ of ingratitude.
3. We send _____ of thanksgiving to God.
4. Some of the most ungrateful people can be ?

Down:

1. Gratitude is one of the _____.
2. God gives us many _____.

How Many Bible and Saint Quotes Can You Memorize?

“O my God, let me remember with gratitude, and confess to Thee Thy mercies towards me.” ~ Saint Augustine of Hippo

Giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father: ~ Ephesians 5:20

“In all created things discern the providence and wisdom of God, and in all things give Him thanks.” ~ Saint Teresa of Avila

And for all these things bless the Lord, that made thee, and that replenisheth thee with all his good things. ~ Ecclesiasticus 32:17

And let the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts, wherein also you are called in one body: and be ye thankful. ~ Colossians 3:15

All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. ~ Colossians 3:17

“Would that I could exhaust myself in acts of thanksgiving and gratitude towards this Divine Heart, for the great favour He shows us, in deigning to accept our help to make Him known, loved and honoured; He reserved infinite blessings for all those who devoted themselves to this work.” ~ Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque

Answer Key

Answer for Word Search on page 5:

J D I R F K F T Y J R D P G R
 G J E K G D G K T K R Y D J V
 K S E U T R I V L H R I K F G
 H U L R I D C H I L D R E N D
 K R Y I B A N Q U E T D K G F
 D Y H A N K S G I V I N G G
 J K R Y U D J R N R J C F K D
 H R K G D V A J U R L G F U S
 P L E G I T D R J D J K I S S
 J R Y L I R E K U B E R E G L
 R I A T H E U B D H R N J N S
 J G U Y U D Y H R H D D E I F
 J D R J E D D Y R N J F D S S
 F H E R S R H R I L G D F S S
 K R I F D K S K M D H F E E K
 K G R T K T H I G I F D H L S
 J T I G U K F K F S F I H B D

Answer for Crossword on page 7:

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G	R	A	T	I	T	U
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P	R	A	Y	E	R	S
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					I	
C	H	I	L	D	R	E
					G	
					S	

Bibliography

Stories: 'Delicious Food on a Filthy Plate' and 'King Alphonsus and the Beggar' from The Catechism in Examples by Rev. D. Chisholm. Imprimatur 1909.

Story: 'The Banquet of the Virtues' from Sunday Morning Storyland by Rev. Wilfrid J. Diamond. Imprimatur November 19, 1945.