

In All Things, Gratitude



Autumn is a season that inspires gratitude as our gardens and farm fields reward us for the previous months of hard work and patience. Being thankful for the gifts of this earth, for the beauty that surrounds us, and for the many blessings in our lives, comes naturally at times like this. But what about when things



aren't so easy or plentiful? Our patron Saint Francis taught his brothers that even in the midst of great hardship there

is still reason to praise and thank God. That doesn't mean we are expected to enjoy suffering—Christ himself prayed for relief in the Garden of Gethsemane—but we are to continually remind ourselves that with God, all will be made new. Pope Francis put it best when he said “Although the life of a person is in a land of thorns and weeds, there is always a space in which the good seed can grow. You have to trust God.” ✝



Early Writings

From Thomas of Celano's *Life of Saint Francis*

They so spurned earthly things that they barely accepted the most basic necessities of life; and, as they were usually far from bodily comfort, they did not fear hardship.... Among them there was no envy, no malice, no rancor, no mocking, no suspicion, no bitterness. Instead, there was great harmony, constant calm, thanksgiving, and songs of praise. These are the lessons by which the devoted father instructed his new sons not so much in words and speech but in deed and truth.

Regis Armstrong, Wayne Hellmann
& William Short, eds.

Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, The Saint, Vol. I
(New York: New City Press, 1999), 219-220.

Scripture

Colossians 3:16-17

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Reflection Questions

- In what ways can I be more grateful?
- Where can I make room in my life for “good seed” to grow?

Prayer

Lord God, there is so much in my life for which I am thankful, but the challenges I face sometimes overwhelm. Inspire me, as you did Saint Francis and his followers, to find reasons for joy in all things and let me be an example of the power of gratitude even among the thorns and weeds.