

Fun and Serious=11-18-23

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* ††† **Humor for today** ††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

My friends wanted to tell their parents they had two turkeys in their house on Thanksgiving Day, although they only had one bird. That explains why they invited me to their place for Thanksgiving Day!

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

Why do you expect me to fly with the Eagles and be with God when I always live with turkeys?

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“Which side of a turkey has more feathers?” “The outside.”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

What is the number one thing all turkeys say? “Eat beef! It is very delicious, nutritious, and good for your health. Turkeys are tough, taste terrible, and are bad for your health!”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“What do you get when you cross a turkey with a centipede?” “Drumsticks for everyone!”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“Why did the turkey stand on stilts?” “Because nobody eats flamingoes for Thanksgiving dinner.”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“What do you call a living turkey the day after Thanksgiving?” “Lucky!”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“What sound does a turkey's phone make?” “Wing-wing-wing.”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“What did the turkey say to the turkey hunter on Thanksgiving Day?” “Quack, Quack!”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“What key has legs and can't open a door?” “A tur-key.”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“Why did they let the turkey join the band?” “Because he had his own drumsticks.”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“What happened to the turkey that got in a fight?” “He got the stuffing knocked out of him!”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“You know you overdid it at Thanksgiving when you thought the serving size for turkey was one.”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“What do you call a running turkey?” “Fast food.”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“What do you say when you have to leave Thanksgiving before dessert?” “Pie-pie!”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“If April showers bring May flowers, what do May flowers bring?” “Pilgrims.”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

“Knock knock!” “Who's there?” “Figs.” “Figs who?” “Figs the doorbell. We have Thanksgiving guests coming.”

††† *Jesus Mary Joseph* †††

My family told me to stop telling Thanksgiving jokes, but I said I couldn't quit cold turkey.

[Have a Blessed and Grace-filled Thanksgiving.]

†††JMJ††† **This is Serious** †††JMJ†††

(November 19, 2023, is the 25th Sunday after Pentecost, but not the last Sunday after Pentecost. Therefore, we pray the prayers from the sixth Sunday after Epiphany. You are

encouraged to read the sermons for this Sunday found at
<https://jmjsite.com/Sixth%20Sunday%20after%20Epiphany.html>.

(Thanksgiving and gratitude)

Ah, Christians, what reason have we nowadays to praise and glorify our God, for every day he raises the dead to life, not indeed to a mortal life, but to a much better one, when he restores sinners to his favor, and gives back to them, when they repent, the life of grace. But what countless other benefits do we not daily and hourly receive from the divine Goodness? And that, too, from a God of the most pure and perfect goodness, who requires a constant gratitude from us; a gratitude which God looks for only that he may bestow still more on us as a reward for it. Now I say further, that, even if we had no profit or advantage from it, still common decency should impel us to be grateful to God on account of the many general and special benefits we have received from him.

Open now the chronicle of your life, and what do you find on the first page? By inheriting the sin of Adam you were an unhappy slave of the devil, an object of the divine anger, a child of reprobation. What did it not cost your God to free you from this misery and to save you from eternal death? It cost him his Incarnation; the price he paid for you is the labor of his thirty-three years on earth, the hunger and thirst, the heat and cold, the poverty and want he suffered for your sake; you cost him his honor and his blood, which he shed for you to the last drop; and finally you cost him his life, which he gave up on the shameful cross to save you from death. This is the benefit in which the divine omnipotence and love have done their utmost, so that, if you were God, and he was your servant, he could not do more to prove his love for you. Ask yourself again, “What honor and reward hath he received for this fidelity?” Ah! “He hath received no reward at all.”

God has given you being, and the noble and precious being of a rational creature, made to his own image, redeemed by his blood; and not only has he given it to you, but he constantly preserves it for you lest you should lose it. In addition to this, reflect how good and kind God is to you, how he takes, as it were, all the trouble and labor on himself, that you may enjoy repose; look on what is around you in the world, and when you have considered everything outside yourself, you will have to acknowledge that God is indeed kind to you.

See the sun during the day, the moon at night; count, if you can, the stars in the firmament, the birds in the air, the fishes in the waters, the animal on the land, the trees in the forest, the crops in the fields, the herbs and flowers in the gardens, the grapes in the vineyards, the fire that warms you, the waters that cool you, the bread that daily forms your food, the clothes that cover you, the men with whom you converse, the Angels that are always at your side to protect you; consider all these things well. Do you know what they are? They are nothing else but benefits bestowed on you by God; he has given them to you; all these creatures cry out: O man, we are made for you, and the Sovereign God has commanded us to serve you. Either for your necessary support, or for your decent recreation and amusement, or to give you a better knowledge and more zealous love of God, so that, helped by us, you may the more easily attain your last end—eternal happiness in heaven. O man, it is for your sake that we exist, and yet you do not love him who has made us for you! O man, I add, is there any servant or attendant who so faithfully looks after his master’s interest as God does after yours and mine?

If you wish to consider a still greater special benefit conferred upon you by God, then go in thought through so many towns and countries of Europe, Africa, Asia, America, China, Japan, India, Brazil, Persia, Morocco, Greece, Sweden, Denmark, England, Holland, and many other places inhabited by heathens, infidels, Turks, Jews and heretics; find out, if you can, how many came into the world in those countries on the very day on which you saw the light. Tell me now, why—since Catholic Christendom, compared to all the other forms of religion in the world, is so small in numbers—why have you had the happiness of being born of Catholic parents and brought up by them? You, in preference to so many others, and even to Catholics who have to live among infidels or heretics, and thus have not the opportunities that you enjoy—you are often strengthened by the holy Sacraments, fed with the precious flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, and encouraged to good by the word of God. How many children, even amongst Catholics, die before birth, or immediately after, without Baptism, so that they can never hope to attain the beatific vision of God? Why was that not the case with you? Who

spoke a good word for you to save you from it? Must you not gratefully acknowledge, praise, and glorify the special goodness of God in your regard?

How long is it since you committed the first mortal sin? Suppose that it is 10, 20, 40, 60, or 80 years ago; tell me now, why are you not 10, 20, 40, 60, or 80 years in the ETERNAL FIRE of hell? What great merit have you had before God more than so many others who were surprised by a premature death in the midst of their sins, and hurried down to hell? Why has not God had such patience with that man, that woman, that boy, that girl, your own companion in sin perhaps, and waited for their repentance? They are now in the flames of hell, and will be there forever; but you, who have perhaps committed far more sins, have been allowed time for penance by the mercy of God, so that, if you wish, you can gain heaven. Think what an immense benefit that is; that the Lord has freed you from hell and the punishment you so richly deserved every time you committed mortal sin, as soon as you repented of and confessed your guilt.

But perhaps you have never offended God by mortal sin? If so, I wish you joy. You have a still greater benefit to be thankful for, since God has saved you in preference to many others from the dangers and occasions of sin in such a special manner, either by keeping away temptations from you, or by giving you his powerful graces in them, without which graces you would have lamentably fallen. What honor and reward hath He received from you for this fidelity?

If we have any sense of honor left, what feelings of gratitude should not even this slight enumeration of the divine benefits excite in us? Must we not often say with our whole hearts, in the words of David: "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that he hath rendered to me? Ah, my God, what return can I make for thy goodness to me? If all the members of my body were so many tongues, and I did nothing all my life but praise and thank thee, would that be too much for me to do? Nay, would it be enough?"

Hear, O man, whoever you be, who has given you life? God. Who has given you eyes, and hands, and feet, and all you have? God. But these are small benefits compared to the others. What do you, then, intend doing to prove your gratitude to him? Is it right and just for you to allow even one moment of your life to pass without spending it in his service by a good intention? Is it not right and just that at all events once or twice in the day, in the morning early and in the evening when you are making the examen of conscience, before retiring to rest, you should recollect what you owe to God, and thank him for it? The swine that are sent into the forest to fatten eat the whole day, and sink down on the ground in the evening satiated, without once looking up to the kindly tree that provided them with food. Such conduct suits swine well enough, but not rational creatures, for no reasoning being should be so ungrateful as to fatten, as it were, the whole day on the divine Goodness and then throw himself down on his bed without thanking the Giver. Christians, do not forget your morning prayers, or the evening examen of the faults you have committed during the day, and if you can find no faults to accuse yourselves of, the benefits bestowed on you by God will furnish you with sufficient matter for reflection.

Countless are the benefits we owe to God. Is it, then, possible that we can willfully offend such a generous Lord? Is it possible that we do not love him with our whole hearts?

During my whole life God has never done the slightest thing to injure me. If now and then he has sent me a cross, it was with a good intention on his part and for my greater advantage, so that I ought to thank him for that also. Otherwise, I have been feeding on his benefits every moment of my life, and now shall I turn my back on him, and set him at naught by trampling his law under foot? No, I cannot do that. Away with all the goods of the world and all the joys and pleasures of the flesh! Away with the flatteries and praises of men! I would rather die a thousand times than willfully offend by sin God, my Sovereign Benefactor.

God expects us to be grateful for the benefits He confers on us, His sole object therein being that He may be able to do us still more good; therefore we should offer Him our constant gratitude for even the least benefit, and give Him thanks unceasingly.

All that we have and are comes from the hand of God: God alone is the Giver and Dispenser and Preserver of all the goods we have or hope for. With reason, then, does the Apostle St. James say: "*Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration*" (James 1: 17). Therefore he who is in want must have recourse to the almighty God. And, oh, how easy it is always to have an audience with this Lord, any day or any hour! He awaits our petitions with the

greatest desire to share with men the treasure of His gifts and graces, which cannot be exhausted, no matter what calls are made on it. The only return He expects for His gifts is gratitude, and the only reason why He expects that is that He may be, as it were, compelled and forced to bestow still greater and more numerous benefits on us.

Ah, Christians, which of us must not acknowledge that he is in need of the divine goodness every moment of his life? And who does not wish to receive still more numerous and greater benefits from God? Nothing is more agreeable than to receive a good thing that we are eager to possess. But gratitude is the key to the inexhaustible treasury of that Lord of infinite wealth. Go with confidence and ask of Him what you wish; all you have to do is to return thanks for what He has already given you, and the new gifts and graces are already prepared for you. "Be nothing solicitous," says St. Paul "but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God" (Phil. 4: 6); for gratitude gives prayer its greatest efficacy. Do you wish, therefore, to be in good health? Then thank God for the health He has given you hitherto. Do you wish to have means to support yourself and your family? Then thank God for the daily bread He gives you. Do you wish to bring up your children well, so that God may bless them? Then thank Him that He has preserved them in innocence up to this. Have you some affair on hand that you wish to bring to a successful termination? Thank God for having so often helped you in your business and aided you with His fatherly protection. Are you visited by suffering, crosses, or trials? Thank God for having saved you from still worse, which many others have to complain of. Have you suffered loss in your temporal affairs through misfortune? Thank God for having preserved to you so long what His Providence knew to be for your good, and for having now taken it away for the same reason. Are you well endowed in temporal matters? Thank God for it and through Christian charity share your wealth with those who have nothing, that so God may preserve it to you. If you have little, then thank God for that, too, and through gratitude give to Him, in the persons of the poor, some of the little you possess.

Christians, if you wish to obtain great favors from God, thank Him for small ones. Worldly goods are the least of the benefits that God bestows on us, although He does give them to the grateful. It is to heavenly, supernatural, and eternal goods that our wishes and desires should tend; and these we shall obtain in abundance from God, if we are only grateful to Him always. The grace of persevering in the friendship of God, the grace of a happy death, oh, what a magnificent grace! Can we desire any greater gift than that on which our happiness for eternity depends, and which is of the utmost importance for us? For no man with all his good works can merit it in the present arrangement of God's providence. And who will obtain that grace? Do you wish to know? He who during life was grateful to God. We can purchase this inestimable gift of perseverance from God so cheaply by gratitude! Let us resolve, then, to be more grateful than we have hitherto been, and never will we cease in all our actions, which shall be directed to God's honor and glory, to thank Him for all He has done for us. Our first thought in the morning when we awake, our last thought at night when we retire to rest, all our thoughts, words, and actions during the day, whenever we think of God, shall be nothing but a constant *Deo Gratias!* Thanks are to God! Eternal thanks be to God for all the good He has done us. Praise and honor be to the God of goodness now and forever. Amen.

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