

Sunday, October 8, 2023 - Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

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Introduction

At harvest time we join the psalmist in offering thanksgiving to God: "You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty." We are grateful for the abundance of the good things of God's creation. Paul reminds us that our thanksgiving overflows into generosity. As the body of Christ in the world, we give ourselves away as bread for the hungry.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty Creator God, your generous goodness comes to us new every day. By the work of your Spirit lead us to acknowledge your goodness, give thanks for your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Deuteronomy 8:7-18

⁷For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, ⁸a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper. ¹⁰You shall eat your fill and bless the LORD your God for the good land that he has given you.

¹¹Take care that you do not forget the LORD your God, by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes, which I am commanding you today. ¹²When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, ¹³and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ¹⁵who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, ¹⁶and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good. ¹⁷Do not say to yourself, "My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth." ¹⁸But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.

Psalm 65

¹You are to be praised, O | God, in Zion;
to you shall vows | be fulfilled.

²**To you, the one | who answers prayer,
to you all | flesh shall come.**

³Our sins are strong- | er than we are,
but you blot out | our transgressions.

⁴**Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your | courts to dwell there!
They will be satisfied by the beauty of your house, by the holiness | of your temple.**

⁵Awesome things will you show us in your righteousness, O God of | our salvation,
O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the oceans | far away.

⁶**You make firm the mountains | by your power;
you are girded a- | bout with might.**

⁷You still the roaring | of the seas,
the roaring of their waves, and the clamor | of the peoples.

⁸**Those who dwell at the ends of the earth will tremble at your | marvelous signs;
you make the dawn and the dusk to | sing for joy.**

⁹You visit the earth and water it abundantly; you make it very plenteous; the river of God is | full of water.

You prepare the grain, for so you provide | for the earth.

¹⁰**You drench the furrows and smooth | out the ridges;
with heavy rain you soften the ground and | bless its increase.**

¹¹You crown the year | with your goodness,
and your paths over- | flow with plenty.

¹²**May the fields of the wilderness be | rich for grazing,
and the hills be | clothed with joy.**

¹³May the meadows cover themselves with flocks, and the valleys cloak them- | selves with grain;

let them shout for | joy and sing.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

⁶The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. ⁹As it is written,
“He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; ¹²for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. ¹³Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, ¹⁴while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Gospel: Luke 17:11-19

¹¹On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, ¹³they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” ¹⁴When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were made clean. ¹⁵Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. ¹⁶He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then Jesus asked, “Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? ¹⁸Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹Then he said to him, “Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.”

Prayers of Intercession

Let us turn our hearts to God, our breath and life, as we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need, saying "Hear us, O God," and responding, "Your mercy is great."

A brief silence.

Generous God, we thank you for the legacy and gift of the church. Make our proclamation clear, our generosity bold, and our community rich in welcome. We raise grateful hearts for the body of Christ where we find belonging. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creator of the earth, the bounty of creation reveals your abundant love. Provide safety and shelter for all wildlife. Save us from the waste of natural resources. We raise grateful hearts for the earth, our home. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of all nations, make all tribes and lands places where justice and inclusion is realized and celebrated. Protect any who are vulnerable and feed all who hunger. We raise grateful hearts for civil rights and just leaders. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Healing God, you see us and are moved with compassion. Attend to those who are sick or dying, surround with love all who are lonely and despairing, and comfort those in need (*especially*). We raise grateful hearts for your lovingkindness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of the welcome table, you gather people to be shaped by your word. We pray for ministries that notice and respond to human needs: food banks, shelters, community resource centers (*other ministries may be named*). We raise grateful hearts for these organizations. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of life, you raise those who have died to new life in Christ. (*We remember especially Clement, Bishop of Rome and Miguel Agustín Pro whom the church commemorates today.*) We raise grateful hearts for the lives and faithfulness of all the saints. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We offer our spoken prayers and those held in our hearts trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

A reflection for this Thanksgiving Sunday

How Much Is Enough?

How do we define an abundant life? Is it by how much we have? Do we define it in comparison or contrast to what others have? Too often, our definition of an abundant life keeps us turned inward because it is characterized by the amount of money we have in the bank, the number of friends by our side, or gadgets in our pocket.

Consider this: the total U.S. revolving debt (98 percent of which is credit card debt) as of January 2011 was \$795.5 billion, according to the Federal Reserve's [G.19 report on consumer credit](#). While the implications of the G.19 report may be hotly debated, what it does tell us is that U.S. citizens, in general, like to spend. Then again, we don't need a report to tell us what we already know. That's the case for most people who live in any first-world country. Take a walk through your house, apartment, or condominium and try to assess whether you have what you need or whether you have far more than necessary. Do you have children? How many toys do they have? How many of those toys go untouched or overlooked because they have so many? Ask a person whose family has moved recently and you will likely find someone who will, if they are being honest, be forced to admit that they own too much stuff. Nothing puts the concepts of needs versus wants or having enough versus having too much into perspective quite like moving from one home to another.

Today's readings provide us an opportunity to redefine what constitutes an abundant life. Each reading orients our perspective outward and gives us pause to consider the correlation between an abundant life and a life lived in faithful relationship to God.



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