

Maybe it's just me but I feel that each year the society in which we live works harder and harder to nudge out Thanksgiving. It seems that this year we went straight from Halloween to Christmas. When does our society give itself permission to pause long enough to reflect on all that God has given, on all that is good, on all that is *enough*? When can we, as a society, do this *without* wanting more, *without* negativity, *without* thinking that we are so smart, so righteous, so perfect, so powerful...and that we are all this from our own ability.

It's times like this, the season of Thanksgiving, when we can be grateful in knowing that we have been called to counter the culture around us. The Scripture passages selected for this year's Thanksgiving liturgy remind us that we *are* God's chosen ones and because of *that* we are called to respond differently to the world around us. We are called to do away with our old selves - the selves full of pride, arrogance, jealousy, hatefulness, and impatience. Those selves need to be abandoned so that we may clothe ourselves in all that is good, in all that is Christ, and to give thanks to God who has made all things possible for us.

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In tomorrow's first reading from Isaiah we only hear the first part of a longer passage where God's blessings on Israel in its past history are being remembered. Although the Israelites were a sinful people, God, out of love and mercy, called them "*My people*" and came to their assistance. Keeping that in mind, the Israelites hoped that God would once again forgive their sinfulness and come to their assistance.

This reading reminds me of *our* past history and of how God's infinite love and mercy called this community into being in 1902 and how for over a hundred years God has walked faithfully with us through the good times and the bad. Just as the Israelites had hope and trust that God would continue to guide them into their unknown future, so also must we rely on our hope and trust in a faithful God who out of love and mercy calls us "*My people*" and who will continue to guide us into our unknown future.

In the second reading of St. Paul to the Colossians we are told that *because* we are God's chosen people we must *act* accordingly. As chosen ones, we have a responsibility to practice daily the virtues of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and forgiveness. We are encouraged to let all of this be done with *love*; through love everything is united and made perfect. St. Paul goes on to instruct us to be thankful. This reading gives us a mighty tall

order to fill, but if we truly believe that we are God's chosen people we *cannot* accept anything less from ourselves.

A line from this reading that I have been reflecting on this week is "May the peace of Christ reign in our hearts since as members of the one body **you have been called to that peace.**" Actually, there's another translation I prefer that reads, "May the peace of Christ **overflow** in your hearts; for this end *you were called* to be one body." (repeat).

Obtaining peace of heart is an inside job. When we allow the peace of Christ to overflow in our hearts, we see everything and everyone through a different lens. It is by looking through that lens of peace and love that we develop a grateful heart. And that is where our true happiness lies. That is where we tap into the awesomeness, the blessedness of having been chosen by God. Seeking peace is our quest and aim; and, it begins on the inside.

Luke tells us in tomorrow's Gospel reading that we are to rejoice not in the fact that we are so great and can do so many wonderful things, but instead, we are to rejoice simply because God has called us to give witness to the peace and love of God's salvation and for that reason our names are written in heaven.

May we strive to hear God's voice calling out to us, "My people, My beloved, My chosen ones," and may we respond accordingly.

So, this Thanksgiving let us give thanks to God who makes all things possible for us.

#### Readings:

Is 63:7-9

Col 3: 12-17

Lk 10:17-24

