



# Reflecting on Thanksgiving

This year so far has provided many moments for reflection. In light of all that has happened, what can we be thankful for? What blessings has God given that we can praise Him for?

Being confined to our homes for some time of the year, we have been given many opportunities for growth, both individually and within our families. Perhaps some took up a new hobby or simply enjoyed the chance to eat dinner together as a family more often. Some may have read the Scriptures more, or carved time out of each day to sing together songs of worship to God. **Every moment we have spent deepening our relationship with God and with our family members is a moment to be thankful for.**

Naturally, with more down time to reflect, we may have found ourselves thinking of distant family, friends, or acquaintances with whom we have lost regular contact. Many took this opportunity to call, text, or even video chat with some of these people, reaching out to them to catch up and express that they were in their thoughts. **What wonderful opportunities God has provided for us to share love with our neighbor and perhaps find ways to encourage and serve them.**

For many, the pandemic and other situations throughout the year have given people an abundance of new experiences. Whether it was dealing with job loss, becoming a student who learned solely at home, meeting new babies in the family, seeing long lines and empty shelves at the grocery store, planning events that you weren't sure would even be able to happen, getting married... Truly the list can go on. Some experiences were filled with joy, and some were more of a struggle than others. **If we depended on God and let each experience draw us closer to our Father, we could allow Him to guide our path as we sought to know Him and His will more.**

Through God's grace, He has provided for us through strange and difficult times this year, sustaining us with His love and strength. While we can experience this strength and the presence of God even during this time when we are unable to celebrate Holy Communion, we still desire to experience intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ. We do not want to look at the time spent away from the full experience of the divine service as time that we "missed out" on fellowship, or worship, or Holy Communion. Rather, we can be thankful for the opportunities that we do have to celebrate the sacrament, knowing that it is not something we deserve, but that God has given us a gift that we long to partake in. **May our longing for this fellowship with Christ and one another deepen our feelings and understanding whenever we are able to celebrate this sacrament together again.**

With increased time spent at home or isolated from the people we normally see on a day-to-day basis, we have learned that people need community. Paul says in Hebrews 10:24-25 – *And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.* **We can offer thanks to God for the recognition that we truly love one another,** and that, even when it's not always possible, we have a desire to be together – with our family and friends, with our congregation, and with our community.

As we consider all that we have to be thankful for, contemplate these lyrics from the hymn, "Doxology." How will you praise God for the blessings He has bestowed on you?

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise Him, all creatures here below.  
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host.  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.*

- VAA