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## **Show gratitude by returning the kindness you've received**



Sarah Hanley

By Sarah Hanley • Posted December 4, 2020

Gratitude is the pillar of the Thanksgiving and Advent seasons. We prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord while we spend time prayerfully reflecting on the abundance of blessings we have received through Jesus Christ. We thank him for the gifts he has given us, and we hope to reciprocate his love for us by showing our love for him.

But how do we do this? How do we show God how much we love him? We can start by examining the word gratitude.

While we understand that it means being thankful, gratitude's true meaning is much deeper, and a hallmark of our Catholic faith. Gratitude means giving thanks for what we have while also showing appreciation and a willingness to return kindness to the world.

With this meaning, we can see that gratitude is also an important characteristic of our relationship with God. God had his only son, Jesus, come down from heaven as a human, just like us. He was sent to us to forgive our sins and prove God's unconditional love for all of us. Now, we show our gratitude for Christ by extending this power of unconditional love to all those around us. It is through our compassion for others that we reciprocate God's love for us.

This year has been a challenging year for everyone. There is no one who has been left completely unaffected by the coronavirus pandemic. And as we approach the Christmas season, these challenges will be greater for many. We must be mindful of this, and share our compassion, love and generosity more than ever before.

It is difficult to welcome guests into our homes for the holidays this year, but we can always joyfully welcome Jesus. We welcome him into our hearts, asking him to guide us through this difficult time. We welcome him in the face of strangers by sharing our blessings and saying "thank you" to all who have given us so much in our lives.

Take the blessings you have been given and share them abundantly with those around you — family, friends and even strangers who may need your help. And remember — the true meaning of gratitude means sending kindnesses out into the world, just as we have received them. Take time this year to nurture the gifts you have been given so they can be shared.

As we prepare for the Advent season, be thankful, be understanding, be gracious and be kind. Know that the smallest act of compassion can make the biggest impact on someone else. Welcome Jesus into your heart, and most importantly, never lose sight of the fact that everything we do, we do for his greater glory.

May God bless you. Have a blessed Advent.

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