

Giving Thanks

For many of us, one of the first things that we are taught at home and in school is how to give thanks. It sounds easy enough to say or do, but as we grow older, it also ends up as being one of the easiest things to neglect.

If we count ourselves among those who routinely say “thank you” for favors given to us, how often have we stopped to reflect whether we really mean it? Is gratitude adequately expressed by saying the words, “thank you”? Perhaps. But I also think that there are far better and more effective ways of expressing our sincere gratitude.

First, it does not hurt to express thanks directly to the person concerned, not necessarily through spoken words, but also through a kind thought or prayer, a smile, a nod, or even a hand wave. For instance, I have seen the latter many times while driving on busy roads and drivers acknowledging those who let them pass through this simple way of expressing thanks. It does make a whole lot of difference to see and experience this basic sign of courtesy on the road and exchanged among total strangers.

Second, we can also show gratitude by paying it forward. That is, if we can do a similar act of kindness for someone else other than the person who did us the favor, then a ripple effect of kindness and gratitude will quickly spread far beyond our own limited reach. Is it not often said that when we give, we should not expect anything in return? It should be more than enough reward to know that your act of kindness will be repaid to someone else who will in turn do the same thing to another, and in the process making a valuable contribution towards creating a much better and kinder world.

Third, we can express appreciation for all the wonderful blessings that we have been bestowed by becoming good stewards of our natural environment. By taking care of doing all we can to preserve mother nature, we are not only showing appreciation for all that the Creator has given us, but that we are also expressing concern for and helping ensure the survival of future generations.

Fourth, we should always acknowledge the fact that, in our daily struggles and victories, we are never alone. Anything that we think we might have accomplished was only made possible by the fact that we were supported by various individuals whose contributions we may or may not even be aware, helped us become what we are today.

Fifth, by being good to ourselves and to others, we are expressing gratitude to our omniscient Creator who has taken care of all our needs even before we become aware of those needs.

This being the start of the year, I wanted this piece to be a simple expression of my gratitude for the many blessings received in the past year, for the many people who have provided invaluable support in countless ways, for the kindness and generosity of friends, colleagues and even strangers, and my family’s unconditional love, care, support and guidance. If I

have not verbally expressed my gratitude in the past, rest assured that I am most sincerely thankful for everything.

Words are truly not enough to express our appreciation for the many blessings we receive each day and for the many selfless deeds of so many generous people around us. We should be thankful that there are many opportunities by which we can express gratitude and that we are still capable of carrying them out. Let us therefore seize those opportunities as much as we possibly can.

Meanwhile, here's wishing you and your families a happy, peaceful and prosperous 2010!

P.S. Just a final quick note to wish one of the most avid readers of this column, my most beloved mother, Mrs. Precy Pascual Santos, a very happy birthday!

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