

A Note of Thanks in Ordinary Time

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By Lucia A. Silecchia

My mother was a fan of thank you notes.

I was not.

Although I liked to write, this particular genre was not a favorite of mine in my younger days. I will admit that, after Christmas or my birthday, I saw the writing of thank you notes to be a chore I did not relish. I enjoyed shopping for thank you cards and invested time and energy into stamps and stationary. Unfortunately, the actual writing of the cards was another thing entirely.

Then, I grew up. My younger self would be horrified to know that writing notes of gratitude is now something that I not only tolerate, but have actually come to cherish.

Today, however, the thank you notes I write are not often for material gifts received – although I am still blessed with those. So often, now, the things that touch my heart and move me to gratitude are acts of love, acts of kindness, acts of sacrifice and acts of friendship. It seems to me that these are things that are worthy not merely of gratitude, but of *expressed* gratitude.

In this season of Thanksgiving, my heart is turned again toward those things for which I am deeply grateful.—beginning with the chance to celebrate a national holiday devoted to the giving of thanks to God for so many blessings. Prayers of gratitude toward God quickly become prayers of gratitude for all the people in my life who are His great gifts to me.

So, it somehow seems right in this season of gratitude, more than ever, to think about those people yet again and take some time to write a note – short or long – of gratitude. Texts, emails or phone calls of gratitude are all good and beautiful. But, for myself, I have found that writing a pen and paper letter does much good for me. In turn, I hope that it may hold some good for the recipient.

For me, taking the time to put into words what a kindness has meant to me is a way to pray in gratitude for the gift of another's kindness, to consider how I might offer similar kindnesses to others, and to remember that to serve others with acts of love is part of a life well lived.

I also hope, though, that a thank you note received may also be a small blessing to the one who receives it. Maybe a note arrives on a day that has not gone well, and it can be a small sign of encouragement. Maybe the note will encourage future kindnesses. Maybe the note is for a long ago kindness, and it will restore happy memories of a good deed long forgotten. Maybe the note will let the recipient know that it is not only splashy, grand gestures that are worth celebrating – but that kindnesses, seemingly unnoticed, can

mean the world to someone. Maybe the note will be stashed away in a desk drawer and be rediscovered years from now when a reminder of gratefulness is needed.

Perhaps in the midst of Thanksgiving's happy blur, it may be time to think of someone whose simple act of love made your life a little better, whose simple words of encouragement got you through a dark season of life, or whose good example helped you keep the faith. Maybe a note to say thank you will brighten their day, bring joy to your heart, and for even a brief moment turn your gazes to what is good and beautiful in a world that seeks for the good.

May you be blessed with a joyous Thanksgiving – with gratitude for the gifts that are great, and for the everyday blessings of ordinary time.

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