

# Connecting New

November, 2023

Gratitude can mean different things at different seasons in our lives, even at different moments in our day. Gratitude can be a feeling, sometimes a very deep, whole heart feeling. Gratitude can be a discipline, often absent of feeling yet sometimes leading to it. Gratitude is the fruit of engaging the spiritual journey. Expressing gratitude is common courtesy and can be part of the accepted literary formula (think of most of St. Paul's letters).

But this month, even as I share a poem about feeling grateful, I am mindful of those among us who are struggling, who are feeling hurt, abandoned, lost, afraid, forgotten or lonely. Those who are grieving. I am hoping that somehow this season of gratitude can expand into a time of comfort and compassion. For this I turn to God and I hope they can too. And when we turn to God, it is crucial that we be honest, to open ourselves that we may receive the love, and so also share a second poem.

## Grateful

I woke up grateful, at 4:00 in the morning  
even though my alarm was set for 7:00.  
Grateful for the comfort of my bed.  
Grateful for the love of my life lying next to me.  
Grateful for my life in God, for grandchildren  
and the joy and life they bring.  
Grateful for good friends, past, present and future.  
Grateful for the ability to walk, think, remember and see.  
Grateful for the goodness that animates my days and nights.  
Grateful even though I am privileged and I could do  
more to help others.  
Grateful for the loving mercy of God.  
Grateful for friendship with Jesus.  
Grateful for one more day to live in this world.

## Too Courteous

As children we learn to express empty gratitude.  
"Thank you" for this and "Thank you" for that,  
though it was rote, absent emotion and sincerity.  
So too with our prayers, full of dull obligation and shallow ritual.  
We need to grow up,  
to learn to kiss with an open mouth,  
to abandon decorum, especially when it comes to God,  
when it comes to Love.

The pathway to our salvation is vulnerable, honest and raw,  
and time spent being courteous with The Divine is procrastination.  
Now is the time to tell God how you really feel and what you really need.  
Love deserves nothing less.

And may we come to experience the depth of God's gratitude for us.

Peace and Blessings,  
Clarence

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