

We read in the first reading that Joshua gathered together in the Shechem all the tribes of Israel to remind them of all the benefits received from God. In our case, a new Joshua - Jesus Christ gathers us here. We are gathered here to remember and thank God and the SCJ community for the benefits received from them.

What we have been given, we see as the years go by. We appreciate certain facts, people and situations not immediately, but after some time. From the perspective of months and years it is easier to see the good that we have experienced. We cannot say that we have never received anything, that we have been omitted by God, that we have not been able to count on someone else's help. Let's look at the people around us, at the concrete people. A moment is enough, and a litany of thanksgiving will flow out of our mouths. Let's look at parents, spouses, friends, priests, our homes, our lives.... We have been given maximum blessings.

How do you show gratitude? You can show gratitude by being good, by smiling, by remembering, by a small gesture, by prayer. Gratitude is not a reward or a debt. Let's not confuse these notions. It is not about revenge, it is not about giving something for something. When we experience help, we immediately wonder what we offer in return. Let us remember, however, that goodness is thanked for, and not paid for.

It is similar with thanking God. He does not need our thanksgiving, but if we love Him and believe in Him, it is worth showing Him our gratitude. We have something to thank for. Without His presence we would be very weak.

St. Teresa of the Child Jesus constantly explained that "gratitude is what attracts the most graces of God; when we give thanks for blessings, God is moved and hurried to give us ten new graces, and if we thank still with the same pouring out, how unpredictable is the multiplication of graces!"

The word 'thank you' will never lose its value. It is not subject to fashions or time trends. It shows that we are not lonely islands, that our lives - whether we like it or not - are connected with God and other people, that we are needed. Gratitude restores faith in humanity, becomes an expression of the sensitivity of the heart. A sincere 'thank you' works both for the donor and for the recipient. This word sows joy, restores sympathy. Gratitude opens our hearts more broadly and more strongly to the needs of others.

Today's Mass reminds us that we are constantly being gifted by others and by God, that each of us should be a man of thanksgiving. What does this mean? We should be thankful for everything, for every new day, for the people we have around us.

Does Jesus expect gratitude? The answer is the Gospel passage about the healing of ten lepers. Only one came back to say thank you. This has not escaped the attention of the Teacher. With what fascination he spoke about the woman who anointed His feet! Whoever has been forgiven a lot loves a lot.

The most beautiful thanksgiving is the Eucharist. It seems to me that prayer is the most beautiful way to say 'thank you' because we cannot always say everything out loud. In this form you can thank God, but also man.

Therefore, on behalf of myself and all ECS participants, I thank the entire SCJ community for the benefits we have received during these few weeks. May the expression of our gratitude be above all our prayer, but also a good word and a simple smile.

Fr. Grzegorz Słodkowski