

January Faith Habit:

Give thanks to God each night...

Over the years, my brothers, sisters and I, our children and grandchildren have heard a favorite expression of our mother's, "What are the magic words?". No matter what you asked for, skittles, a cookie, play-dough or lunch, you generally got the same response, "what are the magic words?" "Please and Thank You" in that order. That is how we were raised.

All of us ask for things every day. Sometimes we even just expect to receive - you know - like heat, food, water, kindness, love, passing a test we really didn't study for, getting instantly out of trouble we got ourselves into - help me get home in this storm, help my friend feel better, help the poor, the ill, the homeless, whatever our needs. We **all** ask but do we remember to say "Thank You" - the other half of the "magic words"?

As we grew up, we were all taught to say thank you for whatever we received whether it was a present, a kind word or a meal... **AND** we were all taught to say thank you to God for all that we had or received each night with our evening prayers and by how we showed gratitude towards others for what we had received. Thank you for giving me a good day, a beautiful sunset, for my family, for keeping me calm so I could pass that test or give a speech or whatever the day brought. The main thing about thank you was that you accepted God's will as yours. For example, thank you for another day with my aunt was echoed each night followed each day as I asked God to help her get through another day of her illness until she passed.

Each evening, late afternoon or late at night, there is always a way to say "thank you", for the blessings of the day. How you say thank you depends on you and how you accept God's blessings.

There is a saying, *"Each morning, God gives us a rose. Some of us will spend the day enjoying its beauty and some of us will spend the day complaining about the thorns."* How we see the rose might determine how we say "thank you". When I count my blessings, I find it easy to share these blessings with others as a thank you to God for

sharing with me. If I have a long, busy day, sometimes the ride home from work can be my time to say thank you for all the good things you sent my way and for the bad things you kept away God. When I worked at St. Joseph's on the St. Norbert Campus, I had a half hour ride home. I really liked to put in a CD or tape of the Rosary. The prayer is among my favorites and the music uplifted and relaxed me. I could give thanks for my day with no interruptions. Now I have a five minute drive - just time for a decade and a song so I usually finish before bed.

When I don't have a ride home, I like to find ten minutes around sunset for silent prayer in my journal. Writing in my journal is never at the same time or even everyday of the week. I do find it to be a way to reflect on my life and an easy way to take note of my blessings and finds ways to appreciate life around me. I end my day the same way I have since I was a child - "*please give me a safe night*" and my first prayer in the morning is "*Thank you for a good night - please help me through the day*".

We were raised to believe that God has given each of us gifts which we need to nurture, share and increase before we return them to the Lord. So tonight before your lay your head down to rest - remember the "magic words".

By Pat Posbrig

Religious Education Facilitator - St Sebastian Parish

