



Thanksgiving 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In most countries, there are seasons. We can experience hot, cold, rainy, dry, and a combination of all. Each season contributes to the creation and what we can yield or harvest from it. We are supplied, nourished and sustained by it. What a wonder the Creator, our God, has made (*Genesis 2: 3 - Thanksgiving Day divine service Bible text*).

In our lives, we also experience seasons; times that may be better, times where it may be difficult and where we face adversity. The COVID pandemic is certainly such a time. However, it should not make us forget God's blessings for ... *we know that all things work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8: 28)*. God remains with us! We continue to praise and thank:

- God, the Father, who faithfully watches over His creation;
- God, the Son, whose sacrifice and resurrection give us access to His kingdom;
- God, the Holy Spirit, who made us a new creation in Christ and sanctifies us for eternal fellowship with God.

It is good for us to take the time to reflect on the great deeds God has done upon us.

There are many ways for us to express our thankfulness. Our expression is not merely in words but also in our actions.

A. Sanctify the Sunday

During this pandemic, some find themselves with a little extra time while others are overwhelmed with trying to balance the chaos in their lives. It is important for us to carve out the time for reflection, prayer, and for the divine service. Setting limits on our work, obligations, and even recreation is advised. The story of Mary and Martha demonstrates that choosing "the good part" (*Luke 10: 38-42*) is the direction we should take. This means seeking our connection to

our triune God, pursuing our personal sanctification, and occupying ourselves with the word and Holy Communion in the divine services. In this way, we express our praise and keep the Sunday holy.

B. Respect the Creation

We are to treat the creation with love and wisdom. Today, the great debate worldwide is about the environment, climate change, and the exploitation of our natural resources. Laws and strategies are put into place to protect the creation. It is important for us to do our part and help secure the future for our children and the generations which follow. In the same manner, together with our neighbour, we are created in God's image. We owe all people the same respect regardless of their origin, tradition or social status. As Jesus taught: we treat everyone as we would like to be treated, and accordingly, we will be treated (*Matthew 7:12, Luke 6:37*). We are committed to the values of the gospel which are love, tolerance, forgiveness and the rejection of violence and injustice.

C. Work, Offering and Sacrifice

As New Apostolic Christians, this concept is not foreign to us. From the very beginning and throughout biblical history, the call to work is present. Servitude is not out of obligation but as the result of our thankful heart's attitude. We desire to contribute, to serve, to work, to offer, and to bring our sacrifice. This is the direct result of recognizing God's grace, His blessings in our lives, and our love for our triune God.

In closing, together with the Apostles and Bishops in the Canada District, we wish you a blessed Thanksgiving and the richest blessing of God for you, your families and the congregations.

Sincerely,

Mark Woll