

32963 Article

By Rev. Drs. Casey and Bob Baggott
Community Church of Vero Beach 11-23-10

A Prayer for Thanksgiving

Every year at this time, we receive a few calls from parishioners who ask if we can recommend a really fitting and eloquent prayer. They are looking for something to be said as family and friends prepare to sit and eat at a bountiful Thanksgiving dinner table. We know of a number of splendid prayers, and have passed on more than a few that we hope have helped the grateful diners to reflect upon their table's bounty and their lives' bounty in fresh ways. But this year, if we are asked for a table grace, we intend to offer a different suggestion.

You see, an old friend of ours has recently died. But her memory is as fresh and as dear to us as ever. It was her custom, as her health declined, to greet each visitor with two lists: one was of the things for which she was proud, and the second was of the things for which she was grateful. As her death approached, her ability to speak deteriorated, and she finally could summon up the strength to utter just two words to every visitor... "Proud!" and "Appreciate!" We were left to fill in the blanks about just what she might be proud and appreciative.

Our friend is clearly in our minds and hearts this Thanksgiving. And we think that in her honor, when it comes time to offer a blessing for the bounty of our Thanksgiving meal, we will adopt her formula. We will ask each person present to thoughtfully list the things of which they are most proud and the things for which they are most appreciative.

Think for a moment about the prospect of listing those things yourself. What are you most proud about? Perhaps you are justifiably proud of your family, your work, your nation, your home, your place of worship. Then consider all that you have and appreciate having. Perhaps you most appreciate your health, your freedom, your hope, your faith.

The exercise of enumerating these blessings can help us, we think, to see them in a new light. Those things of which we are proud show us that God has granted us numerous abilities and strengths that have resulted in our lives feeling fulfilled and rich. Those things we most appreciate reveal what we most value and seek to treasure and protect.

May your Thanksgiving be more than turkey and football. May it be more even, than a warm gathering of old friends and dear family. May this Thanksgiving be a sacred moment, when all that is best in life – all that you honor with your pride and your appreciation -- is celebrated. And may this Thanksgiving be just the start for you of an endless extension of days, all filled with pride and appreciation.

Have a happy and blessed Thanksgiving weekend!