



ST. MARY  
Catholic Church

# Living Worship: Living Worship:

*Developing a Strong Liturgical Spirituality: Part 3*



ST. MARY  
Catholic Church

August 12, 2007

In our series on Liturgical Spirituality, we first defined Liturgical Spirituality as living a life of constant *eucharistia*, or Thanksgiving. In the second issue, we connected the Paschal Mystery that we commemorate in the liturgy each week with the events of our daily lives. We stated that as Christians, we are called to give thanks for the joys and struggles, the dyings and the risings, the Holy Thursdays, Good Fridays, and Easters in our lives. In this issue, we'll discuss the positive effects that living a life of thanksgiving can have upon our daily lives.

***Choosing thanksgiving*** puts an entirely different spin on all the choices we make. As humans, we all sin. But consider how different our lives would be if instead of getting caught up in negatives and saying, "I shouldn't have done that!" or "God, help me!" we lived lives of thanksgiving so great that we said, "Thank you, God, for giving me the ability to make this choice. Even though it had awful results (worst case scenario), I learned from it and now know what I should do." By the grace of God's forgiveness, *we can change*, and that in itself is a gift. **We can choose again, and for *that* we can give thanks.**

The Gospels tell us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd and we are his sheep. Consider that image. We are all members of a great flock, cared for by Christ. All the interactions between the sheep and the wolves in our lives are part of the workings of "God's parish," of which Christ is the pastor. Therefore, we can find refuge in the love of our Good Shepherd, who protects and guides us through the trials and tribulations of life. This is another reason for living in thanksgiving. Even in the hardest times, we can ***choose to give thanks*** for the gift of God's love and care.

***In choosing thanksgiving, we choose joy.*** The idea of actively choosing a life of thanksgiving is, like many things, easier said than done. In every day of my life, I struggle to avoid negativity, and I'm a shameless optimist! But the power of choosing thanksgiving is great, and it leads us away from worry and negativity and toward experiencing Easter joy in every day of our lives.

As Christ said, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat (or drink), or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span?"<sup>1</sup> In this passage from Matthew, Christ tells us to avoid worry. That's a tough task, because worry is a natural part of human experience.

---

<sup>1</sup> Mt. 6: 25-34

But let's do a little exercise. Ask yourself, "What do I worry about?" Think about it. Now, ask yourself, "What would happen if I thanked God for those things that worry me?" Wait, don't ask that question. Give thanks, right now. Thank God for the things that worry you.

Now that you've embraced that worry as something to be thankful for, is it really something to worry about? *If we thank God for everything that comes our way, there is no room for worry.*

I think we can simplify Christ's command, "Do not worry about your life," to two words: "Give thanks." As Christians, we are called to be a people of thanksgiving and joy. Let us show the world our faith in Jesus not only in words and actions but in everything we do at every moment of our lives.

**Choose thanksgiving. Choose joy.**

Paul J. Schutz  
Director of Worship

P.S. If you've missed an issue of Living Worship, they are all available on the Worship page at our website, <http://www.stmaryevansville.org>.