

## Friends

I am writing this in my first week as Vicar, early September, and I am sat in my cosy jumper with the electric heater on - autumn is here!

Autumn is the season of the Harvest. Harvest has long been celebrated by the Church, and when our lives were simpler and more obviously dependent on the soil beneath our feet, the success or failure of the local harvest would have been the difference between life and death. A good Harvest was a cause to give thanks indeed!

Modern technology and trade have made our connection with the land and the harvest seem more tenuous. As a consequence, we can forget our human dependency on the crops of the field. We are insulated from the ups and downs of the harvest; drought and locust affect us little.

As a consequence, we can forget to be thankful, and even worse we can forget we are dependent.

Human beings cannot survive without food and drink. We are dependent on a source of sustenance. Yet, in our plenty we can forget our vulnerability.

We don't like to think about being dependent on anything. We like to pretend we don't need anything. That is much more comfortable. Indeed, our deep-self knows too well we are vulnerable, and spends a lot of energy in covering this up. But whilst we are human, we are **NOT** alone, and we are provided for. Not only materially, physically and emotionally through our support of one another, but absolutely through Jesus Christ.

In his life, death and resurrection, Jesus revealed and proved God's infinite love and power. There is nothing and no-one beyond his desire and ability to redeem. What a gift Jesus is! A gift we can receive with thanks, if only we acknowledge our need of Him.

Giving thanks is an outworking of faith. Because we can only give thanks if we acknowledge our need, our dependence and that we have received something of value. Have you?

This autumn, let's remember to count our blessings, and give thanks. Not begrudgingly, not out of guilt, nor a sense of unworthiness, but joyfully, as we take stock and see what a good God we have and how well he has provided for us.

If you are facing this season with worries about eating, heating or loneliness (or indeed anything else), do speak to trusted friend at church, you are not alone.

I don't know if you say grace before you eat on a regular basis. We do at our house when we have tea around the table (usually with a mouthful of food, as we've already tucked in!) but here are some graces you might like to use this season as a discipline of giving thanks for things we depend on and have mercifully received. I am sure it will lead to peace, hope and joy.

Blessings to you all.

*Jo*



## Mealtime Graces

Thank you, God,  
for the food before us,  
the family beside us,  
and the love between us.  
Amen

Give us grateful hearts, O Father,  
for all thy mercies,  
and make us mindful  
of the needs of others;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

For this, and all we are about to receive,  
may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen.

A, B, C, D, E, F, G  
Thank you God for feeding me.

*And if you are really in a rush:*  
Ta, Pa. Amen.