

# Friends of Silence

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“Is there enough Silence for the Word to be heard?”

Dear Friends ~ This season of Thanksgiving sings with resonance in my soul. I am grateful to live in an intentional community where we all have our tasks and teams to keep things running smoothly. I'm on the garden team, blessed to come together with others to plant, water, weed, and—indeed—harvest both bounty and beauty.

On the personal front, I'm deeply grateful to have weathered major surgery which brought a short halt to my gardening. But it was an experience that offered more opportunities to practice gratitude as my husband took over the cooking, as well as the watering of our home garden, along with his own tasks. Now it is autumn, and I am back to the garden—ever more grateful for the bounty of the earth, the love of family and friends, and the joy that comes with harvest.

As our family gathers for a Thanksgiving feast, I hope the grandchildren will humor me while we all sing: “Oh, the Lord is good to me, and so I thank the Lord for giving me the things I need, the sun and the rain and the apple seed. The Lord is good to me.”

And to you, dear readers, hold close to loved ones, pray for the world, give and breathe gratitude. Carry the spirit of thanksgiving with greetings to those you meet. Cross paths of thankfulness. May we harvest a brighter world. ~ Mary Ann



Gratitude, therefore, takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to the new wonder to praise the goodness of God. For the grateful person knows that God is good not by hearsay, but by experience. And that is what makes all the difference.

## *Gratitude softens us.*

~ Nan Merrill from her interpretation of “Psalm 90” in *PSALMS FOR PRAYING*

~ Thomas Merton in *THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE*

Every day  
I see or hear  
something  
that more or less  
kills me  
with delight,  
that leaves me  
like a needle  
in the haystack  
of light.  
It is what I was born for—  
to look, to listen,  
to lose myself  
inside this soft world—  
to instruct myself  
over and over  
in joy,  
and acclamation.

Nor am I talking  
about the exceptional,  
the fearful, the dreadful,  
the very extravagant—  
but of the ordinary,  
the common, the very drab,  
the daily presentations.  
Oh, good scholar,  
I say to myself,  
how can you help  
but grow wise  
with such teachings  
as these—  
the untrimmable light,  
of the world,  
the ocean's shine,  
the prayers that are made  
out of grass?

Sometimes our light goes out but is blown again into flame by an encounter with another human being. Each of us owes the deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this inner light.

~ Albert Schweitzer in *MEMOIRS OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH*, translated by Erica Anderson

Every minute of every hour of every day you are making the world, just as you are making yourself, and you might as well do it with generosity and kindness and style.

~ Rebecca Solnit, from the article “We could be heroes” on [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com)

**Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity.**

~ Melody Beattie, from the poem “Gratitude”

~ Mary Oliver, “Mindful” in *WHY I WAKE EARLY*

Awakening in a moment of peace

I give thanks

to the source of all peace

as I set forth

into the day

the birds sing

with new voices

And I listen

with new ears

and give thanks

nearby

the flower called Angel's Trumpet

blows

in the breeze

and I give thanks

my feet touch the grass

still wet with dew

and I give thanks

both to my mother earth

for sustaining my steps

and to the seas

cycling once again

to bring forth new life

sun-fire

the dewdrops

become jeweled

with the morning

sun's fire

and I give thanks

you can see forever

when the vision is clear

in this moment

each moment

I give thanks

Can you see the holiness in those things you take for granted—a paved road or a washing machine? If you concentrate on finding what is good in every situation, you will discover that your life will suddenly be filled with gratitude, a feeling that nurtures the soul.

~ Rabbi Harold Kushner in *WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE*

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We often remember to be grateful for big events, like graduating from university or getting married, but it can be more difficult to feel grateful for the small things we do every day. Reminding yourself that eating a meal, for example, is in itself special and can be very powerful. Your immediate awareness of the food in front of you, combining flavors while removing hunger, is a great way to enjoy gratitude as often as you eat! Another is

feeling grateful in the morning for being able to comfortably sleep at night. We gain comfort, satisfaction and peace by practicing mindfulness and gratitude in this repeated fashion.

~ Najma Khorrami, from the article "Four Ways to Wire Your Brain for Gratitude" on [mindfulness.org](http://mindfulness.org)

Everything is here for the same reason, for manifestation and celebration. But the humans articulate this. The others cannot articulate it reflectively. They can be a manifestation, but they cannot reflect on that. Humans can, therefore our role is to be spokespersons for the universe and to appreciate the universe as the context in which the Divine and human meet.

~ Thomas Berry

**Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever!**

~ Psalm 107



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Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.

~ William Arthur Ward

Gratefulness has three steps: not missing the opportunity, appreciating the opportunity, and using or enjoying the opportunity. By this method we come fully alive, full of joy, which is what we are all longing for.

~ Brother David Steindl-Rast

~ Harriet Kofalk, from the song "Awakening"