

## Saying “Thank You”

At a very young age we teach children to say, “Thank you.” My 18-month old granddaughter likes to go around handing people a toy or trinket and then she says, “Thank you” to that person. A bit backwards, but she understands a connection between giving and thanking. So we respond to her with, “You’re welcome!”

I have observed for years the clerks who check us out at stores. It is surprising the number of them that do not say, “thank you.” I would hope they realize that it is because we are shopping there that they have a job—as well as thanking the patrons on behalf of the business itself. I thank the clerks for helping me, and sometimes I get a “You’re welcome” back from them. Hmmm. I wonder how they would respond if I (like my granddaughter) said the opposite response. If I said to them, “You’re welcome,” would they realize that maybe they should have thanked me? Anyway, don’t get me wrong. We have many good clerks that are very courteous and thankful, and I appreciate them!

We should always be appreciative of anything that anyone helps us with, no matter how trivial it may be. We at Good Shepherd appreciate the many volunteers we have. Yes, you are all blessings! And in case you have not heard it lately: a big THANK YOU to each one of you!

But now, I ask myself, how often do I thank God for the many blessings He has given me? Do I even recognize all of them? Guess it’s time I assess my own need to say “Thank you” more often!

## Wet Paint: Don’t Touch!

We probably all know people who see a “Wet Paint” sign, and they simply cannot resist touching it. Ever watch Funniest Home Videos on television? A parent will tell their child not to do something. Then the parent leaves the room. What happens? The child does exactly what the parent told them not to do.

Well folks, we do this to God all the time. God is our Father and our Creator. God told Adam and Eve not to eat from or even touch the tree in the middle of the garden. So the temptation was already there. And repeatedly today, we are tempted, often fail to follow God’s Commandments, and need to seek repentance.

Now that we will be starting the season of Lent, we will hear about the temptations of Christ. Temptations surround us every day, do they not? We have to be alert to them, to recognize them, and learn to resist them. How did Jesus resist the temptations of the devil? By placing God above and foremost, and by turning to Him for strength. You will also notice in the Gospel for the First Sunday of Lent, that Jesus quotes Scripture to the devil (i.e., “*One does not live by bread alone.*”). So this tells us how powerful the Word of God is!

In the Creation Story, God already separated the light and the darkness, calling them day and night. Let us be reminded that we should choose the works of the light and not those of darkness; and, the way to do this, is by drawing ever closer to God.

Let us focus this Lent on what tempts us. Then, let us be reminded of the gifts we have that can help us overcome temptation and sin: Adoration, Reconciliation, Mass, the Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, other devotional prayers, and yes, Scripture!

## Don’t Be a Ham

A priest once told this story in his homily: The wife of a recently married couple was preparing to bake a ham. The husband noted that his wife first cut off both ends of the ham before placing it in the roasting pan. He asked her why she did this. She told him that is what her mother always did. So when they visited her mother, he asked her why she cut both ends of the ham off before baking it. She said it was because her mother always did it. Eventually he asked his wife’s grandmother why she would cut off both ends of the ham before baking it, and her answer, “Because I only had one baking pan for the ham, and if I didn’t cut the ends off, it wouldn’t fit in the pan.”

We all do some things routinely, yet, we may not grasp **why** they are done. Take a moment to think of some of these things we do in our everyday lives. Do we know how/why they originated?

We do many things routinely during Mass and in the Church. If you don’t know why some of these things are done, ask a priest or research them. (For example, “Why is a small amount of water added to the wine in the chalice at the altar during Mass?” or, “Why do we light votive candles in church? Now you have something to research!)

Some families for generations have attended Stations of the Cross every Friday of Lent. Some families do not eat meat on all Fridays—not just during Lent. Some pray the Rosary or other special prayers in their family, either daily or weekly. Hopefully one practice is that we attend Mass every weekend because that is what we grew up doing, and generations before us did the same. If not, you can begin this practice now! I think we all understand the reasoning of why we attend Mass!

The women in the above story may have cut the ends off the ham, but it is important that we do not cut God out of any part of our lives. Let us ponder on what practices or traditions we do (or can do) that will be fruitful ones for generations to come.

## Ole and Lena

(From the Logger’s Shopper)  
Six year old Lena and her four year old brother, Ole, were sitting together in church. Little Ole giggled, sang, and talked out loud.

Finally his big sister had had enough. “Yew’re not supposed to talk out loud in church.”

“Vhy? Who’s going to stop me?” Ole asked.

Lena pointed to the back of the church and said, “See dose two men standing by da door? Dey’re Hushers.”

**G**od grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever and ever in the next.  
Amen.

## The Goodness in Growing Old—or Growing Up

I looked through my high school year books recently. Lots of memories packed in those pages. The saying by my Senior picture was, “An innocent face, but you never can tell.” Hmm. Hey, I always tried to be good, but sometimes fun can lead one to the confessional. Yes, there were so many good times...and there were also many hard knocks. Friends come and go, and some stay for a lifetime. Some have hurt us; some we may have hurt. Some were there when we needed them; some we were there when they needed us. I recently came across some valuable words from a famous children’s book. In it, I realized that for most of us, it takes a long time to form who we really want to be. Perhaps we always dreamed of being a nurse or a teacher or a firefighter. But no matter what career choices we made doesn’t really matter. What matters most is the integrity and moral values we stand by and uphold in whatever we do.

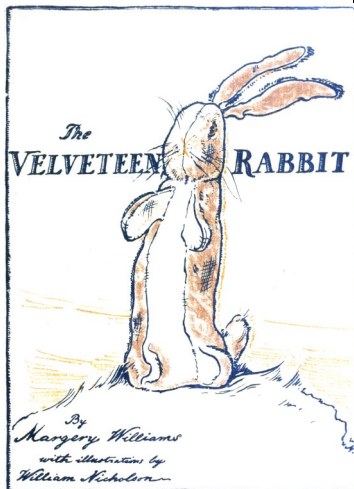
So, don’t let any hard knocks get us down. Learn from them. Be yourself—be REAL! Learn what is important in life and focus on that in the years ahead!

### Excerpt from the Book, *The Velveteen Rabbit*

by Margery Williams:

“You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby.

But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand.”



### TAKEN FROM THE INTERNET

When GOD wanted to create fish, He spoke to the sea. When GOD wanted to create trees, He spoke to the earth. But, when GOD wanted to create man, He turned to himself. Then, GOD said, “Let us make man in our image and in our likeness.”

If you take a fish out of water, it will die; and when you remove a tree from soil, it will also die. Likewise, when man is disconnected from GOD, he dies.

GOD is our natural environment. We were created to live in His presence. We have to be connected to HIM because it is only in HIM that life exists. Let us stay connected to GOD!

## Christmas Prank

This year we did something different for Christmas. Some of the children wanted Christmas Day in their own homes, but they still wanted all their siblings and cousins to get together. So we decided that January 7 would be a good day—hoping the weather would work in our favor (which it did).

Our oldest son and wife agreed to host this year in Minnesota. So we all trekked there for the day. It was a most enjoyable day, everyone brought something to share for the dinner, and we even took in a grandson’s hockey game. Our children decided to each bring an exchange gift (or so they told me) rather than buy gifts for each sibling and the nieces and nephews. Gifts would be given out in the form of a game, and you would have the option to play “take away.” Ron and I did not bring exchange gifts for this, because we don’t need anything and figured the fun would be watching the kids and grandkids play out the game. But no, my daughter-in-law insisted she had several “extra” gifts, so we had to play. They decided to go oldest to youngest in choosing a gift to open. With Ron out of the room at the time, they informed me I was next oldest and to begin the opening. I opened a gift, which was a rosary and a 9-bead chaplet. Since I have several rosaries at home, my thought was, “I think I have one similar to this already,” but I did not want to offend whoever brought it.” So I politely thanked them. Then someone opened a little St. Joseph statue. I said, “Hey, we have one just like that on our night stand!” Someone else got a crucifix. Someone else got Demdako angels.” Finally I questioned, “What is going on here?” The kids had decided to snatch things from our house and wrap them up for this gag game. There was my vase, angels from my collection, a potato masher, knick-knacks and much more. Cute idea. At least some of the items got dusted, was my thought. When Ron and I were asked which items from our home we missed, it was only one: our crystal dinner bell. We assumed one of the grandchildren probably broke it and they discreetly threw it out.

So, just how much “stuff” have I accumulated over the years? If I hadn’t missed any of these things for a few weeks, would I ever miss them? Spring will be a great time to go through the junk closet upstairs and any other crooks and crannies that have “stuff” and decide what is not needed in the house. Better yet, this Lent will be a good time to ponder on what “stuff” may be cluttering my mind that I can free myself of. Care to join me in doing this?

## Save Your Passwords Securely?

Each time I go online, it will ask me if I want to save my passwords securely? The choices Google offers are “No, thanks” or “Sign in.” Then when I go into particular accounts, it will ask me again if they can save my password. The choices are “Never,” or “Got it.” Now really...What part of NO don’t you understand? When I click “Never,” I should not have to click it again. Do they honestly think that we will change our mind two hours later or the next day? Or, are they perhaps thinking we will answer too hurriedly and click where we really didn’t intend to?



Matthew 5:37 states, “Say ‘Yes’ when you mean ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ when you mean ‘No.’ Anything beyond that is from the evil one.”

Sometimes we waver when we say yes or no. But there are times in life that we need to say Yes and No with great conviction. One of those times is when we profess the Creed at Mass: Yes, I believe in God the Father...Yes, I believe in Jesus Christ...Yes, I believe in the Holy Spirit. These are very important statements. We should never waver when we profess this.

And NO, Google, I am not interested in what you have to offer me today, or tomorrow either.