

"Give thanks to God,  
for He is good:  
His love is everlasting."  
— Psalms 106:1-2

www.graceinaction.org  
November 2008

celebrate  
*November*

# GRACE IN ACTION

LIVING CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP™

- 1 All Saints
- 2 All Souls
- 13 St. Frances  
Xavier  
Cabrini
- 21 Presentation of Mary
- 23 Christ the King



James Baca photo

## new parable Gratitude multiplies graces

**T**here was a family who every year at Thanksgiving worried about every detail of the holiday dinner – whether the china matched and the silver was perfectly polished, whether the crystal goblets were spotless and the wine was reserve. This family set out place cards to assign where each family member would sit, and only the amount of people who could fill the exact number of matching chairs in the formal dining room were invited. This family corralled their pets into a separate room so they would not disturb the dinner. The children were asked not to touch the carefully arranged flowers or the festive centerpiece. The family sighed with relief once the meal was over.

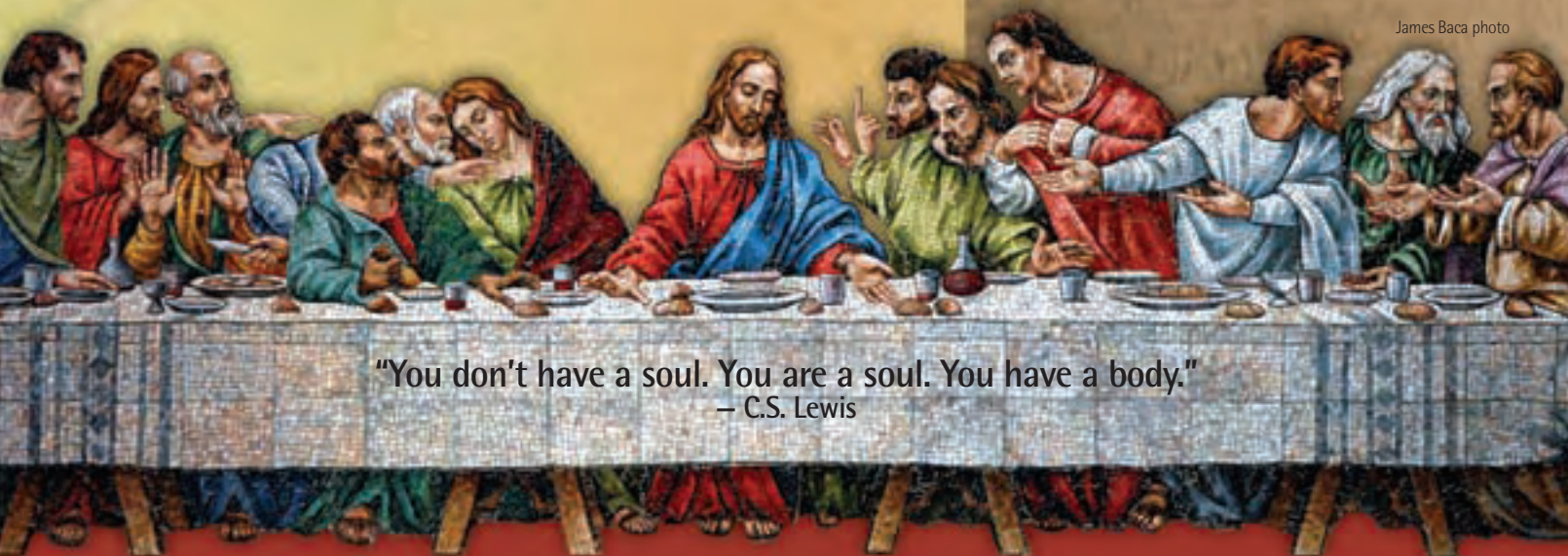
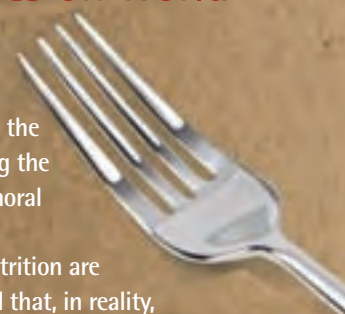
There was another family who enjoyed the chaos of Thanksgiving, because it also brought the unpredictable gathering of loved ones. This family believed in the saying, "the more the merrier!" Pets, children and nonfamily members were welcome in the dining room, where chairs of all shapes and sizes accommodated everyone comfortably at the table. Dishes did not match, nor napkins nor goblets, which made for a colorful and festive table arrangement to go with the colorful conversation. And this family was grateful for their abundance and their understanding that there can be perfection in imperfection.

## try this Pope preaches on world food crisis

Pope Benedict XVI takes a strong stand on the global food crisis, calling the growing emergency a moral issue of justice.

"Hunger and malnutrition are unacceptable in a world that, in reality, possesses production levels, resources and sufficient knowledge to put an end to these dramas and their consequences," the Pontiff said to world leaders last summer. "[Food is] intrinsically linked to the safeguarding and defense of human life." The Pope emphasized that the crisis involves everyone – from food producers to consumers – not just governments.

**TRY THIS:** As American consumers, one sacrifice we can make to help ease the food crisis is simply to eat less – and eating less upholds our ancient Catholic traditions of fasting and abstinence.



James Baca photo

"You don't have a soul. You are a soul. You have a body."  
— C.S. Lewis

"Eucharist" derives from the Greek word for "thanksgiving."

## defining moments

### Stewardship alphabet

Source: OSV's Catholic Dictionary

**Sacrifice:** The act of offering to God, and often the subsequent destruction or consumption of some gift. The greatest sacrifice is the offering of Christ himself to the Father through the Holy Spirit, perpetuated at each holy sacrifice of the Mass.

**Sanctification:** The process by which one grows in holiness — that is, conformity to Christ. This occurs through the infusion of sanctifying grace, which enables one to be a friend of God.

**Sanctifying Grace:** The "habitual" life of God given to one at baptism and reinforced when receiving the other sacraments, in prayer and through the performance of charitable works.

**Sanctity of Life:** The Church's constant teaching that human life is valuable and possesses inherent dignity and must be protected from assaults and esteemed as a gift from the Creator.

**Service:** The exercising of one's duty toward God and neighbor.

**Sloth:** One of the seven capital sins, which is marked by a spiritual laziness preventing one from doing his legitimate duties.

**State of Grace:** The condition whereby one enjoys the friendship of God.

**Stewardship:** The proper and profitable management of that with which a person is entrusted. In Christian terms, this would refer to both physical and spiritual things, which are to be used and administered responsibly, because all things ultimately belong to God.

Visit [www.graceinaction.org](http://www.graceinaction.org) for more definitions from letters A-S.



## sowing seeds

### "Thanks be to God"

*"All temporal and spiritual goods are created by and come from God."*

— Stewardship: A Disciple's Response  
U.S. Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship

We have so much for which to offer thanks. According to Meister Eckhart, a German theologian, "If the only prayer you say in your whole life is 'thank you' that would suffice."

Gratitude and grace go hand in folded hand. In our fast-paced culture, we're leaving behind one of our social graces: writing thank-you cards. While a phone call or an e-mail are better than nothing, when somebody goes out of their way to make you feel loved, take time to send a note. Making the effort to send a note, when possible, helps entrench gratitude; and you know how gratifying it is to receive a thank-you note.

**What are the top three items on your gratitude list? To whom might you send a long overdue thank you?**



James Baca photo

## kids corner

### Bless us, O Lord

Share a prayer at the Thanksgiving table or at any meal.

Jesus, bless what Thou hast given,  
Feed our souls with bread from heaven;  
Guide and lead us on the way  
In all that we may do and say.  
Amen.

Be present at our table, Lord,  
Be here and everywhere adored.  
Thy creatures bless and grant that we  
May feast in paradise with Thee.  
Amen.

**Happy Thanksgiving!**  
from Grace In Action.



Illustration by Quincy Benton

## faithfact

### Cast your ballot

November 4 is a national election day; and the U.S. Catholic bishops have stated that "responsible citizenship is a virtue and participation in political life is a moral obligation" ("Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," No. 13). To understand why and how the Church enters the public square, visit [www.graceinaction.org](http://www.graceinaction.org) for links to the following:

- Faithful Citizenship, a bilingual website by U.S. Catholic bishops ([www.faithfulcitizenship.org](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org))
- NETWORK, a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace ([www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org))



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If you can no longer stomach fast food, learn more about Slow Food USA, based on a food system that is "good, clean and fair." Log on to [graceinaction.org](http://graceinaction.org) and see our link.