

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



This time of year evokes a sense of gratitude for us in the United States as we approach the Thanksgiving holiday. As Fall begins changes of temperature, color, and shorter daylight, we are reminded that change is an inevitable part of life. Life is full of changes, most out of our control. We can choose to let the changes affect us negatively or we can choose to find hope. It seems that everything is in flux when we are living through a moment of change. In such moments questions arise that can be scary or challenging, questions that can clarify what is happening and help us focus where our energy in the moment needs to be placed for new life to emerge. Change makes us look for constancy, for stability. As people of faith our hope is Jesus. While he invites us to change and conversion, to become a new person, he remains constant in his love for us. Saint Paul consistently proclaims that “God is faithful” (1 Cor. 1:9). Paul’s experience of God’s faithfulness, God’s constant love, was born from the vast change that took place in his life.

Paul persecuted early members of the Christian community. His Pharisaic beliefs fueled a deep hatred for anything other than the practice of Judaism. While fulfilling his mandate to rid the world of Christianity, Jesus appeared to him, calling Paul to believe in a way foreign to everything that Paul knew, experienced or

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believed. Jesus invited Paul to believe in a new way and to change his understanding of God the Father. This change brought great upheaval to Paul’s life and faith. Yet, faith led Paul to find hope in the new

way. Paul’s hope that God was faithful reconfirmed, renewed and refreshed and his new faith practice. This experience of divine faithfulness gave him the hope to not only believe, but to proclaim God in a





new way to a new group of people. Hope led Paul to be grateful.

Discernment of religious life and priesthood can be an involved process of learning, searching, and believing. Lots of questions arise and lots of challenges are presented. This can leave us feeling unsettled and like we are floating in a wildly fast flowing river. To keep focus on the discernment process we must find hope and stability. We need to take hold of God's hand and invite Him to journey with us through the moment. It is in the journey that our Faithful God provides answers to our questions. The answers always lead us to the peace that gives us space to receive clarity of what we search for and desire. Here gratitude is birthed because we realize that no matter what, God is with us and we will always be okay. Hope and gratitude bring us to

calmer waters to hear the answers to our questions and to receive courage to keep faithful in the process.

In this season of gratitude God invites us to find hope in his faithful love. We experience His love, kindness and mercy through others. Gratitude keeps us focused on the reality that while changes are inevitable, God's faithfulness neither changes nor diminishes. The Lord is our hope in the moment. Whatever we choose, the Lord will always remain faithful in loving us. As you move through your discernment we Servites our praying for you. We are grateful for you and we thank God for you. May your celebration of Thanksgiving be full of joy, peace, love and gratitude. Remember no matter what, because God is faithful, we will always be alright. This is our reason for gratitude and our hope this Thanksgiving season.

Reflection Questions:

1. What I am most grateful for in my life? How can I express this gratitude in the way I live my life?
2. How does gratitude for my blessings encourage my discernment of God's call?

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