Thanksgiving Contemplations



By Dr. R. Pletsch

I feel for those of us that due to stress and problems think they have nothing to be thankful for at Thanksgiving, forgetting family, friends and the Lord. My mother was philosophical. She often used these sayings: remember when God closes a door, he opens a window; one of God's greatest gifts is often unanswered prayers; and something like you complain because you only have $2 in your pocket, but there are many with only $1. I realize she did not reinvent these sayings, but I was blessed that she passed them down.

If you take the time to contemplate any of these, you too might find more gratitude for things in your life. Maybe you did not get your Cabbage Patch doll or your Tickle Me Elmo, maybe all you got was a set of used gloves, but that did keep you warm for a couple of years. That did not ease your disappointment at the time, but maybe now you can reflect. I know people who died in the 9-11 terrorist attack, I've learned to be thankful for the thousands that did get out in time.

I hope you are getting the point. One of the Missionary Sisters of Mother Teresa told me it took her a long time at the Soup Kitchen here in Chicago to realize our homeless are so much better off than those she left in India. She told me of people in India fighting to get that which these homeless throw away.

When the Iron Curtain fell in the '90's, some finally got a chance to leave the United Soviet Socialist Republic to come to the US. They had culture shock. I met people who came here from Estonia, Poland and East Germany. They were grateful for everything. They still fly the US flag and go to church to give thanks. I have a friend whose brother died at Tarawa. He said he thanks God for all the soldiers who did come back.

When you really look at your life, it is not very hard to be thankful without even thinking of Pilgrims and Indians. As you realize and understand what we have, teach it to the younger generation.