

Donnybrook / Pro-Cathedral

22 December 2021

Welcome

In the previous translation of the Roman Missal, there was an appealing prayer which went like this: Our prayer of thanksgiving adds nothing to your greatness, but makes us grow in your grace.

Topic

The prayer of thanksgiving is perhaps underrated.

Steps

Meister Eckhart, the great Dominican spiritual writer, can be deep and difficult. But he can also be very plain and simple. Once he said: if the only prayer we ever said was "thank you" it would be enough. You can see why: we say thanks because we have received; we receive because we are in need; we are in need simply as human beings before God and God gives simply because that is who God is. The whole extraordinary story of grace is there.

Our readings today portray two women, raising mighty songs of thanksgiving to God. Hannah praises God because she has become a mother. Mary's thanksgiving is much wider: her joyful song underlines God's mercy, really God's love, God's faithfulness and God's choice to stand by the humble of the earth. On the lips of Mary, Luke has placed a summary of his Gospel, but in a setting of prayer, specifically the prayer of thanksgiving.

Conclusion

None of this is to say that life is not difficult or that tragedies don't happen. It is and they do. Ultimately, we believe that the negative, no matter how predominant it may seem at one moment, is the God's last word. On the contrary, nothing in all creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. We can always say, My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.