

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

I'M FINE AND YOU?

I heard a story about a man who robbed a Wendy's Restaurant in Atlanta and was so put off by his skimpy haul that he called the restaurant twice to voice his disapproval. That's better than what police say Arthur Bundrage did. Bundrage approached a Syracuse bank teller and demanded \$20,000. When he got home, he discovered that he had been shortchanged. Outraged, he stormed back to the bank to tell them what he thought of their service. That's when he was arrested!

Well all of us complain about a lot of things in life as well. It seems that ours is a very critical age and complaining society. People are just not so grateful anymore. It could be that we have too much and take it for granted. Someone once said, "Things were better when we were poor." Maybe that's true. The poor don't have anything and therefore are grateful for something!

This coming Thursday we celebrate Thanksgiving Day. It's a day of roast, football games, family reunions and the unofficial start of the Christmas Season. But above all, Thanksgiving Day really should be a day of prayer for all the blessings that we enjoy-our life, our health, our families, our faith and the prosperity we enjoy as a nation. But how often we take these things for granted. And we complain! We complain that we should have more and be more. Gratitude is a very rare commodity and many of us just don't stop to count our blessings.

A year ago on November 18, 2018, I lost a good priest friend by the name of Monsignor James McDonald. I have often spoken about him in homilies. He was like a second father to me and gave me a lot of good, practical advice as a priest. Monsignor contracted cancer and was hospitalized. When I went to see him a few weeks before his death, he said, "You know, I visited many sick people over the years as a priest, but I never really knew what it was to be sick myself." Isn't that the case for all of us? We never appreciate the blessings of life until we are deprived of them.

Remember the ten lepers of the gospel? They all were healed of that terrible disease by the Lord. But they soon forgot about their benefactor. But then one of them, a Samaritan, had a glint of understanding. He came back to Jesus, knelt before him and poured out his thanks. All of us should be a little bit like that "Tenth Leper" and instead of complaining, be a little more grateful.

Recently, I found a little poem that was penned many years ago by the Cardinal of Boston, Richard Cardinal Cushing. The Cardinal was suffering the effects of bad health and advancing age, but he wrote this: "I live out in Brighton, close to B.C. and I'm just as healthy as I can be. I have arthritis in both my knees and when I must speak, then I talk with a wheeze. My pulse is weak and my blood is getting thin-but I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in. I need arch supporters to strengthen my feet, my ankles are swollen, I'm white as a sheet-I toss in my bed without sleep every night. No wonder each morning I look like a sight. My memory's failing, my heads in a spin-but I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in. Diverticulitis is a word that's hard to spell, but it's a disease from which I'll never get well. Ulcers that keep me on a diet with Malox prevent me from resting in a funeral box. The length of my sermons brings yawns or a grin-but I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in. The moral is my friends, as this tale I unfold, it's better to say "I am fine with a grin than to let people know of the shape that we're in!" Happy Thanksgiving!

*Sincerely in Christ,
Father Jerome*