

THANKSGIVING DAY 2013

David H. Teschner
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Everyone knows of Anne Frank, the teenage girl who went into hiding during World War II with her family in Amsterdam because they were Jewish. They survived in limited quarters for nearly two years without going outside before informants told the Nazis of their whereabouts. Only her father survived after their arrest, but Anne's diary, written during her years in the secret annex, was later discovered. From it we learned that Anne was remarkably hopeful during very trying and frightening times. We're familiar with her diary entry, "Despite everything, I believe that people are really good at heart," and "I don't think of misery but of the beauty that still remains."

I heard a quote the other day from Anne that surprised me because at first it didn't seem to fit in the context of her experience: "No one ever became poor by giving." (repeat)

Then it became quickly obvious that Anne wasn't referring to actual poverty but a lack of soul or spirit – a mindset of scarcity. Even people who are literally dirt poor know how to give and thus don't necessarily think of themselves as impoverished. Poverty, we

might say, can be more a state of mind than just a physical state.

In spite of Anne's restricted circumstances and the near presence of those who wished her harm through no fault of her own, she wasn't inclined to feel sorry for herself or act the victim. She didn't allow herself to feel poor.

Today, this holiday is named for a form of giving we call thanks giving.

Thankfulness leaves no room for despair, anger or self pity.

I ran across this poem by an unknown author a few years ago in some literature for an organization named Food for the Poor. It's titled "Drinking from the Saucer." It goes like this:

*I've never made a fortune and I'll never make one now,
But it doesn't really matter 'cause I'm happy anyhow.*

*As I go along my journey, I've reaped more than I have sowed.
I'm drinking from the saucer 'cause my cup has overflowed.*

I don't have a lot of riches and sometimes the going's tough.

But while I've got lots of friends to love me I think I'm rich enough.

I'll just thank God for blessings that his mercy has bestowed,

I'm drinking from the saucer 'cause my cup has overflowed.

If you give me strength and courage when the way grows steep and rough,

I'll not ask for other blessings, I'm already blessed enough.

*May I never be too busy to help bear another's load,
I'm drinking from the saucer 'cause my cup has overflowed.*

Thanksgiving is a discipline. We have to practice it constantly to get to that place where our cup is more than just half full but we're drinking from the saucer.

It's a lot easier to see what goes wrong in the world than what's right with it. The sun comes up every day without fail. The coffee pot brews in minutes. The toilet flushes and hot water comes out of the shower

head. The car starts and gets us where we want to go in pretty short order. The grocery store has well stocked shelves, and there is almost always someone who smiles when they see us and says hello like they mean it. The list of things that goes right every day is endless if we stop and think about it.

What if we got in the habit of always saying thank you for this multitude of everyday little things that go right pretty automatically? We'd be thinking or saying to ourselves "Thank you," all the time. We'd have few occasions to be poor because we are always giving thanks.

Another less well known saying by young Anne Frank is, "The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be."

Here she sounds like Jesus. "Look at the birds of the air..." "Consider the lilies of the field..." "Do not be anxious about your life..."

God has given us more than enough so we should never be without. Engender the habit of giving thanks

remembering, “No one ever became poor by giving.”
AMEN.