

REFLECTION

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Scripture: Philippians 4: 12-14

Can I still give thanks when I have less than I desire? Do I seek God when life is peaceful and prosperous, or only when I am troubled, discouraged, or overwhelmed? These are questions that gently invite us to investigate our hearts. St. Paul writes, "I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being."

Paul knew what it was like to have more than enough, and he knew what it meant to face great need. He experienced seasons of comfort and seasons of hardship, moments of joy and times of suffering. Yet through every changing circumstance, he discovered that God's grace was sufficient. Whether surrounded by abundance or struggling through scarcity, Paul remained anchored in the Lord. This is a tremendous challenge for us since we frequently base our happiness on what is occurring around us. When things go well, we feel grateful; when they don't, we wonder if God ignored us. Paul reminds us that God remains faithful in both success and sorrow. The Christian life does not guarantee that we will always get what we desire. Rather, it is the knowledge that we are unlikely to confront challenges alone. Whether we have plenty or limited resources, God gives us the grace to continue.

St. Paul reminds us that the greatest security in life does not come from material belongings, money, health, prestige, or achievement. It comes from knowing that God is with us and has our lives in his hands.

"I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone."

- Thomas Merton