

54 days to change the world. Day 31.

Today is the thirty-first day of this novena. We will be praying the Joyful Mysteries in a spirit of thanksgiving.

On day 29, we discussed cultivating a spirit of thanksgiving in times of hardship and waiting. While hard times can often create obstacles to thanksgiving, it is also true that times of ease and joy can also result in ingratitude. This seems contradictory, but from experience we know it to be true. Think about the times when you've had a sense of happiness: perhaps it was when you first entered into a relationship, found an incredible group of friends, or had success in your career and hobbies. During these times, it is so easy to become caught up in the material circumstances surrounding your happiness and excitement and forget to recognize the source of all things good: God the Father.

In times of abundance, let us use the joy and excitement to lead us to deeper gratitude for all that we have. If truly rooted in gratitude and prayer, this spirit of thanksgiving will persist within you, even in times of difficulty. As the Psalmists writes, we are called to "be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!" (Psalm 32:11) Yet we are also called to root this joy in Christ and recognize that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." (James 1:17)

We have Mary as the perfect example of this joy and gratitude. While you pray, reflect on Mary's response to Elizabeth when she shares her Immaculate Conception:

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant" (Luke 1:46-48)