

A MINISTRY OF GRATITUDE: ONE THOUSAND THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR

During troubling times like these, we can retreat into ourselves and become self-centered; we can overlook the needs of others and fail to see that God is the giver of good things. However, we can take a more realistic approach. Times are bad, but they also have possibilities, and now is a perfect time to accentuate the positive. The following listings of diverse items are fruits of my 2009 annual retreat. At each remembrance I can truly say, "Thank you, Lord." In so doing, I find that I am praying, and as gratitude increases in one's life, the thank yous increase.

You are welcome to add a thanks when items overlap with your own experience, but that is not really my intention. The sheer number "one thousand" may baffle you -- and if you look hard enough you may find duplicates. Rather than focusing on my listing's content, I encourage you to try your hand at a similar process either mentally or on paper. The listing is never complete, for more and more items emerge with time. God's goodness is an infinite ocean, and we experience a very small part at any time. Let's spread the Good News: we are blessed with many gifts. Besides, our quality of life improves when we grow in gratitude for them.

1. BIG THINGS

The hardest listing is the first: What are the great gifts given?

GOOD SHEPHERD	FAITH IN THE FUTURE	ETERNAL LIFE	DIVINE MERCY
GOD'S FAMILY	HOPE FOR IMPROVEMENT	FAMILY & FRIENDS	ANGELIC GUIDES
RELIGIOUS PEOPLE	PARISH SUPPORT	PEACE OF SOUL	GRACE UPON GRACE
LOVING FOLKS	DEDICATED SUPERIORS	BAPTISMAL EVENT	BIG PLANS
SACRED CHRISM	HOLY EUCHARIST	OIL OF THE SICK	MAGNIFICAT
JESUIT COMMUNITY	MARY'S TRANSPARENCY	CALVARY'S CROSS	FRESH STARTS
MOBILITY	CALL TO SACRIFICE	PRECIOUS BLOOD	PRAYER TIME
ABUNDANT HEALTH	SUFFICIENT EYESIGHT	EVEN NERVES	BASIC HEARING
CLEAN ENVIRONMENT	PURE FRESH AIR	NUTRITIOUS FOOD	ADEQUATE FUNDING
MY VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS	MY WEBSITE	MUSIC ENJOYMENT	WORKING SPACE

2. AMERICA, OUR LAND

We give thanks for national gifts and our ability to use them responsibly:

THE CONSTITUTION	ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS	PURPLE MOUNTAINS	FREEDOM TO ACT
DIVINE PROTECTION	SUPREME COURT	SEASHORES & WAVES	GRAND TREES
OLD GLORY	PUBLIC INTEREST SPIRIT	SHIMMERING LAKES	ENGLISH LANGUAGE
SOCIAL SECURITY	WEATHER BUREAU	TEMPERATE FORESTS	MASS MEDIA
SOARING EAGLES	GREAT LAKES NAVAL BASE	GREAT PLAINS	POSTAL SERVICE
DEMOCRATIC HERITAGE	NATIONAL SECURITY	SCENIC DESERTS	CIVIL RIGHTS
NATIONAL PARKS	IMMIGRANT'S REFUGE	ROARING WATERFALL	FEDERAL HISTORY
WILD TURKEYS	LIBRARY OF CONGRESS	INDEPENDENCE DAY	RIGHT TO VOTE
INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS	AIR CONTROL TOWERS	LINCOLN MEMORIAL	FOREIGN HELP
"IN GOD WE TRUST"	EDUCATION & RESEARCH	SOUND DOLLAR	UNITED PEOPLE

3. MOCKINGBIRD'S REPERTOIRE

God's creatures, near and far, turn our minds to praise:

MINT SPRIGS	CROAKING FROGS	SORGHUM SYRUP	EVERLASTING HILLS
POKEBERRIES	BLUE PHLOX	ARCHING RAINBOWS	BUZZING BEES
THE MILKY WAY	DEXTEROUS HANDS	TWINKLING STARS	SWEET POTATO VINES
YOUNG COYOTES	CHURCH BELLS	HOOTING OWLS	DASHING COMETS
BAYING HOUNDS	GLORIOUS SUNRISES	MEANDERING RIVERS	STREAKING LIZARDS
MASSIVE ELMS	RED RIVER GORGE	MONARCH BUTTERFLIES	HEMLOCK COVES
TRUMPET-CREEPER	BUBBLING SPRINGS	ROCK OVERHANGS	KENTUCKY RIVER
VIOLET CARPETS	FROLICKING COLT	CUMBERLAND MOUNTAINS	BLACK SNAKES
BLACK LOCUSTS	SCURRYING POSSUMS	FLOWERING MEADOWS	FOX DENS
FALLING LEAVES	BOUNDING FAWNS	SINGING MOCKINGBIRDS	WINDING TRAILS

4. REALIZING GREEN TRAVEL

Travel and all its details, whether for short or long spans, require a sense of gratitude:

BIKING TOURS	SUBWAY TRAINS	UNFROSTED WINDSHIELD	SAFE TIRES
CARPOOLING	STRAIGHTAWAY AHEAD	AVOIDED ACCIDENTS	UNCROWDED REST STOP
SMOOTH SAILING	END OF CONGESTION	DESIGNATED ROUTES	EVADED DETOURS
ROAD SIGNS	COOPERATING WEATHER	TRUSTY BRAKES	"TRIP QUEST"
SPEED LIMITS	CATNAP TIME	LEGIBLE ROADMAPS	TOURIST HAVENS
BRIGHT WINGS	SOFT LANDINGS	ALERT DRIVING	ARRIVAL RELIEF
TOLL BRIDGES	GASOLINE SAVER	TRAFFIC-COP WARNINGS	SCENIC VIEWS
LIT RUNWAYS	HOSPITALITY SPOTS	THREE-TRIPS-IN-ONE	AFFORDABLE LODGINGS
MOVING TRAFFIC	JOURNAL RECORDING	EXITING FROM CITIES	TIME-OUTS TO STRETCH
PACKED SNACKS	DIMMED HEADLIGHTS	FOND DEPARTURES	AFFABLE COMPANIONS

5. NATURE'S RHYTHMS

Rhythms all around deserve our appreciation:

GURGLING CREEK	FIDDLERS' JIVE	SQUEALING CHILDREN	JUMPING FISH
HONKING CARS	TINKLING COWBELLS	HOMILY DELIVERED	BEING IN-TUNE
CHANTING CHOIRS	BREEZE-BLOWN LEAVES	WINDY MONDAYS	CROW SQUAWK
WARNING BREEZES	SHOUTING GRADS	JUMPING CHEERLEADERS	MOURNING DOVE
RUSHING TIDE	TRACTOR'S HUM	MUFFLED DRUMS	FULL MOON
BARKING DOGS	BLASTING TRUMPETS	DRIPPING DOWNSPOUT	FAR-OFF SIREN
CRACKLING BLAZE	RUFFLED GROUSE	DARKENING CLOUDS	SHOUTED COMMAND
GROWING CORN	JACK-HAMMERING	PEELING THUNDER	CHIRPING LOCUSTS
FLASHING SKY	SPATTERING RAIN	FLUTTERING SNOW	STADIUM CHANT
PELTING SLEET	CRUNCHING ICE	DRIBBLED BALL	SQUARE DANCES

6. SIGHTS WORTH REMEMBERING

We thank God for the memories of places worthy of recall:

OLD WASHINGTON	SLAVE CEMETERY	SNOW SLED SLOPE	PETTING ZOO
NATURAL BRIDGE	MAMA'S KITCHEN	BLUE LAKES, CO	SMOKY HOLLOW
THRESHING EVENTS	STAINED GLASS	PUERTO RICAN FLOWERS	BARN BURNING
OUR TOBACCO BARN	CUMBERLAND GAP	CONQUERED PEAK	VIEW OF ROCKIES
BETHLEHEM AT MORN	DAYBREAK OVER HILLS	CIVIL WAR SITES	FILLED SILO
ALSATIAN CHAPELS	AUNT MARY'S PLACE	ALFALFA FIELD	KY STONEWALLS
ROCKCASTLE RIVER	WAGON WITH CORN	STEAM LOCOMOTIVE	CAVE INTERIORS
DOWNED AIRPLANE	RETIRED HORSE "BABE"	LIT ALTAR CANDLES	DAMSON PLUMS
GRADE SCHOOL	BLUEGRASS MARATHON	CHARTRES CATHEDRAL	FIREWORKS
SAILING BOAT	PARENTS' GRAVES	GRANDPA'S ROCKER	COUNTY FAIR

7. TASTE BUD SAVORS

Good Tastes add quality to life:

WILD PLUMS	TANGY SAUERKRAUT	LIME ICE	POKE SALAD
HOMEMADE DESSERTS	SIMMERING CRACKLINGS	DILL PICKLES	OATMEAL COOKIES
SOUP VARIETIES	KOHLRABI SLICES	CHERRY COBBLERS	FRENCH BREAD
12-VARIETY SALAD	VEGETABLE JUICE	HOT PEPPERS	FRIED CHICKEN
PERSIMMON PIE	PEACH TURNOVERS	COLD-CUT PLATE	CARAMEL CANDY
COOKED KALE	SWEET POTATOES	SCRAMBLED EGGS	BLACK OLIVES
MULLED CIDER	SAGE-FLAVORED SAUSAGE	CORNBREAD MUFFINS	TARTE FLAMBEE
FRIED CATFISH	CHURNED BUTTERMILK	WILD RASPBERRIES	PIMENTO DIP
DANISH ROLLS	SALTY PEANUTS	CHARLIE'S APPLES	HORSERADISH MIX
BUBBLING BREW	HICKORY-NUT CAKE	BUTTERED POPCORN	TURNIP KRAUT

8. LISTENING & SPEAKING

Sounds are better perceived when in a thankful mood:

HOMILIES GIVEN	ANIMATED CONVERSATION	SHARED GOOD NEWS	MEANINGFUL ADS
ATTENTIVE AUDIENCE	PHONE CONNECTIONS	FIRESIDE CHATS	PERCEPTIVE TALK
THOROUGH LOOK	ENTERTAINING LECTURE	TV INTERCHANGE	EVENING FESTIVAL
CLASSICAL MUSIC	INTERVIEWER QUESTIONS	SPONTANEOUS LAUGH	PACKAGE DELIVERY
ARTFUL DODGING	PHONE CONVERSATION	"GLOBISH" TERMS	DRAMATIC WORDS
HEARING ANOTHER	DISTINCT SPEECH	PLAIN SPEECH	BELLY LAUGH
EMAIL SENDING	MEDITATION MOMENTS	GOOD CONVERSATION	GOLDEN SILENCE
BIRD SONGS	MELODIOUS VOICES	CRY OF ANGUISH	DIVINE WHISPERS
SPIRITUAL EXERCISES	SOLEMN BLESSINGS	PRECISE DIRECTIONS	BUMPER STICKERS
FOREIGN TONGUES	BOLD INSTRUCTIONS	ENCOURAGING WORDS	ANNUAL RETREAT

9. FEELING COMFORTABLE

Thank heavens, comfort comes in surprising ways:

HALLOWED SHRINE	VISITING AWHILE	CLEAN UNDERWEAR	HUNTER'S MOON
QUIET NOOKS	WEATHER REPORT	EXPLORED ATTICS	FRONT PORCHES
POCKET MONEY	COUNTING PACES	CHARITY GIVEN	GLORIOUS SUNSETS
MANUSCRIPT SENT	NATIVITY CRIBS	SOFT MOSS COVER	EASTER EGGS
NATURAL SHELTER	TODAY'S NEWS	REAL PUZZLE	"NAVY HYMN"
WEEKEND JOG	CORRECT EYE CARE	CHIRPING NESTLINGS	MUNCHING CATTLE
FAMILIAR SMILES	WARM FIREPLACE	UNSOLICITED THANKS	FORGIVING FAULTS
REFRESHING PAUSE	LILY-OF-THE-VALLEY	FULL-SPECTRUM SUNLIGHT	END-OF-DAY
REFRESHMENT TIME	WONDERFUL DINNER	EXAM FINISHED	SOUL'S PEACE
MIDDAY NAPS	GOD'S FORGIVENESS	WOOLY WORMS	HOT SHOWER

10. THE NOSE KNOWS

Each sense provides us with an array of goodness worth thanking God for:

CINNAMON BUNS	CIGAR SMOKE	BAKING LOAVES	VANILLA YOGURT
LILAC FRAGRANCES	GOOD RESTAURANT	SMELLY CHEESE	WHITE LILIES
NEW-MOWN HAY	BAKERY AROMA	SUNSCREEN FOR NOSE	SHUCKED CORN
CEDAR SCENT	SKUNK'S PRESENCE	BUTTERMILK PANCAKES	JELLY-MAKING
CAMPFIRE SITE	SMOKEHOUSE INTERIOR	BOILING CABBAGE	BAKED DUCK
INCENSE-FILLED ROOM	"HUNTER'S STEW"	CRANBERRY SAUCE	STINK BUGS
ONION RINGS	HERBAL TONIC	FRESH HORSERADISH	SCENTED CLOTHING
FRESH-CUT BOUQUET	PERFUMED SOAPS	SIZZLING MEAT	KUDZU BLOSSOMS
HICKORY SMOKE	FOREST FIRE	PINE BOARDS	FLOWER GARDEN
COW PARLOR	FRESH-BREWED COFFEE	SOUP-OF-THE-DAY	BAKED BEANS

11. GRACIOUS REMEMBRANCES

Those of us blessed with good memories have much to be thankful for, and we regret that we cannot remember recent events:

SERVING MASS	SNOW OF 1950	FIRST COMMUNION	SCHOOL-BUS DRIVER
HOME PLACE	LIGHTNING RODS	GRANDPARENTS' VISITS	PEARL HARBOR
MEANINGFUL WORK	RELIGIOUS SISTERS	PRISONERS-OF-WAR	MAJESTIC ROCKIES
WAGON RIDES	SUNDAY AFTERNOONS	HUNTING CROWS	GOLF COURSE
POKER GAMES	DYING FRIENDS	YELLOWSTONE TREK	PIANO SONGS
LENTEN FASTS	SOUTHERN CULTURE	CUTTING TOBACCO	UN CONFERENCE
"HIT PARADE"	CHERRY HARVEST	BOOK TREASURES	PASCAL FIRE
'37 FLOOD	NEW-BORN CALVES	STORED RECORDS	RHUBARB SAUCE
FACTORY WHISTLE	OVERTURNED AUTO	REPAIRING TRUCK	SODA BREAKS
CKACKLING HENS	CLASS GRADUATION	COLLEGE SOCIALS	HOUSE PAINTING

12. PHYSICAL EXERTIONS

Physical exercises are ideal times to thank God:

WOOD-SPLITTING	WILDERNESS HIKING	JOGGING YEARS	FISH CATCHING
PACE-COUNTING	WHEAT SHOCKING	SEASONAL GARDENING	BRIAR CUTTING
EXERCISE ROWING	FENCE-ROW SCYTHING	DAILY WALKING	CORNCOB FIGHTING
RAINY CAMPING	BLACK CANYON CLIMBING	MOUNTAIN CONQUERING	CROW SHOOTING
CAPE SNORKELING	APPALACHIAN WALKING	SEED CORN JOBBING	ROPE SWINGING
STEER-CHASING	SWISS HITCHHIKING	CONFERENCE DIRECTING	WASP BATTLING
HARVESTING CROPS	CONCRETE BLOCK-LAYING	INDIANA CAVING	CAR SERVICING
FRUIT GATHERING	BURMA-BRIDGE CROSSING	STREAM WADING	DUNE CROSSING
CLOVER BALING	CISTERN BUILDING	STRAWBERRY PICKING	COW FETCHING
HOG KILLING	CORDWOOD STACKING	MANUSCRIPT PREPARING	TEXAS BIKING

13. CHANCES TO CELEBRATE

Every day we have much to celebrate:

ALL ANNIVERSARIES	BUDGET COMPLETIONS	HOLIDAY PLANS	ELECTION DAY
MARRIAGE VOWS	BIRTHDAY PARTIES	HOLIDAY SALES	NEW YEAR'S EVE
MARINE'S RETURN	VOW DAYS	ORDINATION BANQUETS	SONG FESTS
PHOTO OPS	DEDICATING MONUMENT	FOURTH OF JULY	PARISH OUTINGS
SAINT PATRICK'S DAY	WEDDING FEASTS	HOMECOMING AFFAIRS	COOK-OUTS
CHOICE OCCASION	YULETIDE EXCHANGES	WRAPPING PRESENTS	VICTORY PARADES
NOTABLE TRIPS	THANKSGIVING MEALS	QUITTIN' TIME	SCHOOL PLAY
POTLUCK MEALS	ADVENT WREATHES	TOWN MEETINGS	TOASTING OTHERS
UPCOMING EVENTS	LANDMARK DECISIONS	GRADUATION RECALLS	MEMORIAL WEEKEND
EXPEDITION SUCCESS	MERRY CHRISTMAS!	GET-TOGETHER AGAIN	RETELLING STORIES

14. APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

We discover what works best over time; some technologies prove to be real gifts and promises for a better world:

BICYCLE TRAVEL	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	SOLAR FOOD-DRYERS	WIND TURBINES
OAK SHADING	COMPACT FLUORESCENTS	HYBRID AUTOS	COLD FRAMES
LAWN-TO-WILDSCAPE	SOLAR GREENHOUSES	CLOTHES LINES	INSULATED WINDOWS
LOW-MEAT DIETS	HOT WATER HEATERS	GEO THERMAL PUMPS	AQUICULTURE PONDS
SOLAR COOKING	PRESSED EARTH BLOCK	COMPOST TOILETS	ARTIFICIAL WETLANDS
BIOFUEL SOURCES	PHOTOVOLTAIC ARRAYS	ORGANIC GARDENS	TIDAL ENERGY
MICROHYDRO POWER	VIRTUALLY-WILD GINSENG	BUILDING DESIGNS	RETREAT CABINS
LOW-COST HOUSES	ENERGY CONSERVATION	RECYCLING SYSTEMS	EFFICIENT STOVES
WOOD HEATING	COMFORT-ZONE HEATING	-- AND COOLING	HERITAGE SEEDS
HORSE-LOGGING	DISEASE-RESISTANT FRUIT	SMART ELECTRIC GRIDS	
	ADVANCED FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARDS		

15. EXPERIENCE & SKILLS

Our experiences are gifts when well directed:

PARISH PRIEST	COMPULSIVE PLANNER	SALAD MAKER	EX-SMOKER
RURAL PERSON	SIMPLE LIVER	FARMER AT HEART	FAST TYPIST
NOT A RETIREE	FISCAL CONSERVATIVE	EARLY RISER	SPRING PROMOTER
CONTRASUMER	ECUMENICAL CHRISTIAN	PAPAL DEFENDER	SOUP CREATOR
COW MILKER	PART-TIME GARDENER	KNEE-JERK DEBATER	ORGANIC CHEMIST
HISTORY READER	RADICAL -- I THINK	POETIC COMMONER	WORLD PATRIOT
TREE HUGGER	CHAMPION UNDERDOG	PASTORAL MINISTER	U.S. CITIZEN
PRISON CHAPLAIN	STORY-TELLER	EARTH HEALER	CONFIRMED HIKER
EMERGING PASTOR	LITURGY PRESIDERS	LONG-TERM WRITER	HEAVENS GAZER
GLAUCOMA BEARER	POLITICAL TINKERER	INHERENT COUNTER	ETHNIC COMPILER

16. SAINTLY PEOPLE

People who enter our lives become our models, and remind us that we always need to grow in God's grace:

GRATEFUL SICK	BEDPAN EMPTIERS	THE UNAPPRECIATED	EAGER MIGRANTS
JOLLY SENIORS	JOKING VICTIM	DEVOTED TEACHERS	HUMBLE SOULS
HUMOROUS DYING	SELFLESS DONORS	CHARISMATIC LEADERS	HUNGRY KIDS
INSPIRING ORATORS	ACCIDENT RESPONDERS	FAITHFUL SPOUSES	SHAGGY BEGGARS
HOSPICE WORKERS	FRUGAL HOMESTEADERS	NOBLE GENTLEMEN	REMOTE HERMITS
SERIOUS GODPARENTS	CREATIVE PEACEMAKERS	AA MEMBERS	DIRT FARMERS
GENTLE MOTHERS	DILIGENT HOMEMAKERS	CAREFUL ARTISTS	WISDOM LOVERS
CRAFT MARKETERS	MENTALLY CHALLENGED	STRIVING YOUTH	NURSES & DOCTORS
GRACEFUL ELDERS	KINDLY APPROVERS	"GOD LOVES YOU"TELLERS	HAPPY FOLKS
GLAD ENTERTAINERS	DEMANDING FATHERS	SPECIAL-NEEDS CARERS	SMILING CLOWNS

17. SERVICE PERSONNEL

Still more people change our way of seeing the world by performing their routine services well:

FIRE FIGHTERS	STATE POLICE	CHEERFUL BARTENDERS	MARKETING FARMERS
LOCAL JUDGES	GARBAGE COLLECTORS	FUNERAL UNDERTAKERS	SHORT-ORDER COOKS
CIVIC LEADERS	911-RESPONDERS	ALTAR SERVERS	MOST PLUMBERS
BRAVE ROOFERS	SCRAP DEALERS	ADMISSION OFFICERS	WALMART GREETERS
GRASS CUTTERS	AUTO REPAIRERS	MERCHANT SAILORS	OFFICE SECRETARIES
LAUNDRY PEOPLE	CIVIL DEFENDERS	FLIGHT ATTENDANTS	PAPER PUSHERS
FACTORY WORKERS	HERB GROWERS	SALES PEOPLE	STREET SWEEPERS
GRAVE DIGGERS	SIDEWALK MUSICIANS	CIRCUIT JUDGES	DEFENSE ATTORNEYS
BANK CLERKS	LETTER CARRIERS	MAIL SORTERS	PHONE OPERATORS
BORDER GUARDS	HORSE TRAINERS	TAILGATE SELLERS	TRAIN CONDUCTORS

18. MODERN DEVICES

We sometimes take things for granted, and forget that our forbearers did not have all of the conveniences to make their lives as easy as ours:

SAFE MEDICINES	MODERN PRINTERS	X-RAY SEARCHES	WORLDWIDE WEB
FIBERGLASS BOATS	TELEVISION SETS	HANDY TOOLS	MOVIES
VACUUM CLEANERS	COMPUTER SCREENS	MEDICAL HELICOPTERS	OTC DRUGS
FLOOR COVERINGS	COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITES	CELL PHONES	CLOCK ALARMS
PLASTIC UTENSILS	NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO	BEVERAGE PERCOLATORS	NYLON ROPE
BATHROOM SINKS	BAR-CODE READERS	ROOF VENTILATION	AIR PUMPS
WASHING MACHINES	DEPENDABLE ELECTRICITY	DIGITAL APPARATUS	RECLINERS
ELECTRIC MOTORS	LONG-LIVED BATTERIES	DURABLE FLASHLIGHTS	EASY BANKING
GEODESIC DOMES	REFRIGERATION UNITS	HURRICANE WARNINGS	DEBIT CARDS
FILLING STATIONS	AUTOMATIC STARTERS	AIRPORT SCANNERS	MERCURY ARCS

19. SLIPPERY WINTERTIME

No season is without its merit, even winter, which I find harder to endure with each passing year -- but it too has elements for which to be thankful:

SEASON'S GREETINGS	JANUARY SNOWDRIFTS	LENTEN PERIOD	MARCH MADNESS
FEBRUARY LIGHTNING	SUNSHINE ON SNOW	WINTER CARDINALS	PACKED SNOWBALLS
TAPPING SUGAR MAPLES	DEFINED TREE SHAPE	COLD-FREE	NEEDED TRACTION
AWAITING THE EQUINOX	HICKORY-SMOKED HAM	FROST ON WINDOW	RINGING ANVIL
ARTFUL ICE CARVINGS	SUPER SNOWDRIFTS	CRACKING OF PECANS	STACKED GIFTS
HOTBED STARTS	DECEMBER ORNAMENTS	RABBIT TRACKS	COLORLED LIGHTS
VERY EARLY PEAS	DRIPPING ICICLE	ROCK FORMATIONS	DOG'S WAG
SERVICEBERRY BUDS	WINDOW FINGER ART	NEW RESOLUTIONS	ROBIN'S RETURN
PIERCING SCREECH OWL	SNOWFLAKE CRYSTALS	VALENTINE CARDS	MELTING SNOW
SHARP WINDS	GARLIC SPEARS	WITCH HAZEL BLOOMS	WOOD SMOKE

20 BURSTING SPRINGTIME

Good things happen in this season when life quickens:

NESTING BIRDS	ARRIVING FOLIAGE	WARMING SOIL	FLAMING AZALEAS
ROVING CATS	COMPOSTING HUMUS	REMEMBERING TIME	TURNING COLD/HOT
SCENTING TULIPS	BLOSSOMING ROSES	ABOUNDING WILDLIFE	SPARKLING DEW
SHOWERING APRIL	SURFACING EARTHWORMS	SINGING BLUEBIRDS	AWAKENING POPLARS
PEEPING CHICKS	SEEDING MAPLES	THUNDERING JUNE	REDDENING RADISHES
EXPLODING PEONIES	GARDENING SEASON	FRESH-SMELLING AIR	RETURNING WRENS
BLOOMING DAISIES	REUNITING CLASSMATES	PLAYING KITTENS	SPROUTING ONIONS
DASHING CHIPMUNKS	RADIATING DOGWOODS	NODDING DAFFODILS	FLOWERING MAY
APPEARING REDBUDS	FOOLING AROUND	YIELDING VEGGIES	RUNNING CHILDREN
LEAPING DEER	SPREADING DANDELIONS	SHINING MOON	GREENING WILLOWS

21. MATURING SUMMERTIME

Summers have so many good things that we find it difficult to name a few good samples to be thankful for:

EXPLODING ZUCCHINI	VINE-HIDDEN MELONS	HORNET'S SIGHTING	BEAN BUNCHES
LOCOMOTIVE WHISTLES	SUMMER SQUASH	BAREFOOT-FREE	WORMY PEACHES
CIRCLING VULTURES	PURPLE IRONWEED	PUNGENT MARIGOLDS	COPIOUS SWEAT
BLUEBERRY CLUSTERS	CUCUMBERS GROW	POST-STORM CALM	LAZY DOG DAYS
VACATIONING KINFOLKS	SOUNDING CRICKETS	LAYING CONCRETE BLOCK	TUMBLE BUG
SPLASHING TROUT	AUGUST NECTARINES	FISHING & SEINING	POND SCUM
BAMBOO THICKETS	FERMENTING SILAGE	ICE-WATER BREAKS	BUMBLE BEES
RED-WING BLACKBIRDS	NIGHTLY REPRIEVE	BUTTERFLY GARDENS	LONG DROUGHT
SCURRYING OPOSSUM	CIRCLING DRAGONFLIES	WAVING BLUEGRASS	DUSTY PATHS
ENDLESS JULY DAYS	MOLE BEAN STALKS	TOBACCO'S PINK TOPS	GREEN GRASS

22. TRICKY AUTUMN

The fall season is loved but we do so with an ambivalence; still we need to be filled with gratitude as the year draws to a close:

BITING YELLOW-JACKETS	GOLDENROD PATCHES	STACKED CORDWOOD	FLOCKING BIRDS
STOPPED SCHOOL BUS	DRIFTING LEAVES	SCARFS & GLOVES	FALLEN PEARS
JACK-O-LANTERNS	CORN SHOCK SENTINELS	CEMETERY ROWS	LATE APPLES
ROTUND PUMPKINS	ASTER-GARNISHED HILLS	GOBBLING SOUNDS	WINTER WHEAT
SEPTEMBER MISTS	TOBACCO STRIPPING	GURGLING BROOKS	HOVERING HAWKS
ELDERBERRY PIE	NOVEMBER THANKSGIVING	SUDDEN FLOODS	COMING STORMS
POOR SOULS REMEMBERED	UNPACKED SWEATERS	OCTOBER'S GLORY	CIDER-MAKING
CREATION'S GRANDEUR	PRE-FROST HARVESTING	PEAR TOMATOES	WALNUT STAINS
FIRST FREEZES	PURPLE TURNIPS	WINDOW CAULKING	WARM FIRES
HARVEST MOON	IT'S MOSQUITO-FREE	LONGER NIGHTS	TRAIL-MAKING

23. REDEEMING OPPORTUNITIES

Some specific actions are not remembered, but their collective activity is worth our gratitude:

ACHIEVING HOMEWORK	HEALING OUR EARTH	RENEWING TIES
OVERCOMING TEMPTATIONS	REDIRECTING THE WAYWARD	ENCOURAGING THE LOWLY
PROMOTING NUTRITION	BURYING THE DEAD	INITIATING PROJECTS
FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT	CALMING THE AGITATED	IMPROVING HEALTH
FEEDING THE HUNGRY	HELPING THE HOMELESS	WRITING LETTERS
ANOINTING THE SICK	OBEYING SUPERIOR WISHES	MONITORING FINANCES
VISITING SHUT-INS	PURIFYING INTENTIONS	EMPHASIZING SMALL DEEDS
ACCEPTING ONE'S AGE	RECOUNTING ACTIVITIES	COOKING MEALS
OFFERING OUR ACTIONS	AIRING THE INDOORS	MAKING DO
CONSERVING RESOURCES	STOPPING DRUG-USE	STARTING SAVINGS ACCOUNT
LOBBYING CONGRESS	RESPECTING LOCAL TALENT	EATING HEALTHY STUFF
ENHANCING COMMUNITY	RESTING WHEN TIRED	TRAVELING LIGHTLY
DRESSING MODESTLY	OMITTING FASHION CHANGES	FORGETTING GRIEVANCES
	IMPROVING HEALTH FACILITIES	

24. PERSONAL GRATITUDE

We have many personal gifts that makes us say "Thank You" to the Lord:

VOCATIONAL CALL	DAILY ENTHUSIASM	PERFECT DESIRE	VITAL FAITH
HOLY SCRIPTURES	IMMENSE UNIVERSE	ENDURING FRIENDS	LONG LIFE
POTABLE WATER	ATTACK ON PRIVILEGE	UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS	COUNTY LOYALTY
RIGHTEOUS ANGER	TRUSTING PARENTS	DOING MY BEST	SENSE OF COLOR
WALKING AREAS	INVOLVED SUPPORTERS	LEARNING BY MISTAKES	HUNGER CONCERNS
OUR CROSSES	DRIVING CLEARANCE	PATIENT ENDURANCE	GREEN LANDSCAPE
GRATEFUL PAST	THE POOR WILL WIN	SOUND FOOD PROGRAM	PRO-LIFE STANCE
BEAUTIFUL VIEWS	CONSERVATIVE ETHIC	SUFFERING WITH OTHERS	NEEDED RESPONSE
CRY OF POOR	PAST 10-K RACES	FAIRNESS PLEDGE	POVERTY EMBRACE
VIVID MEMORIES	CONFRONTATION HABITS	CATHOLIC OUTLOOK	FARMER'S WAYS

25. LITTLE THINGS

If we constantly thank God for little things, we will perceive ever bigger ones:

SUN'S RAYS	PROMINENT EXITS	CRAWLING ANTS	COMPLIMENTS
HUSH PUPPIES	KNOWING GUIDES	COMPLETE WORKOUTS	SINCERE "HELLO"
COOL LEMONADE	CLEAR MARKERS	RESTFUL NIGHTS	WELCOME MATS
CAROLINA WRENS	LOWER GAS PRICES	AGREEING AUDIENCES	FREE SATURDAYS
CHILD'S PRESENT	AVAILABLE COMB	OPPORTUNE TREATS	SUCCINCT LETTERS
ON-TIME BUS	COMIC CHARACTERS	LEVEL WALKWAYS	COUNTRY STORES
LUCKY GOOGLE	JOYFUL YOUNGSTERS	EASTER WATER	GOAT HERD BELLS
"THEY'RE OKAY"	SMILING BABIES	WAGGING COLLIES	SHADY LANES
KEEPSAKE GIFTS	GRAPE ARBORS	COLD SOFT DRINKS	FINDERS, KEEPERS
LUNCH SPECIALS	SENSE OF DIRECTION	DAYDREAMS	AVAILABLE SEATS

Now it's your turn. How many items can you list that are God's gifts to you? Strangely, you soon find that some of the most obvious are forgotten at first attempt. You become embarrassed and want to tear the listing up and start over. Don't. This current one can become a record for you to understand how your own sense of thanksgiving can grow in time. You will soon be a "minister of gratitude." You will now help others see the good things they have in a life ever growing in simplicity and quality. Each of us can become spiritually "profit-motivated," with the emergence in our lives of simple gifts that abound all around. If we constantly gather gifts, we are praying always -- and that's the way the Lord wants us to be.

I bet you can beat my listing if you try.