

# Thanksgiving prayers, blessings before the big meal, music, and reflections: Day 3

## ***Introduction:***

In the nine days leading up to Thanksgiving I will share a novena of prayers, reflections, and music selections that may enhance the celebration of this special day with your family and friends.



## ***Day 3:***

**Today I will share a prayer-meditation by Rev. James Martin, SJ, Editor of America Magazine. Father Martin touches on almost every basic area of gratitude that we Americans have to offer back to God this Thanksgiving. Read when you have time to reflect on each word.**

### ***“I’m Grateful, God: A Thanksgiving Prayer for Everyone”***

By: Rev. James Martin, SJ

I’m grateful, God, for so many things. Now, I know I’m not the most grateful person you know, God, so let me take some time to tell you what I’m thankful for.

I’m grateful, God, for the gift of life. Without you I wouldn’t be here. Without you nothing would be here. Without you nothing would be at all.

I’m grateful for my parents, God. Even if they weren’t perfect, or completely

functional, they loved me the best they could, and they worked hard to make sure that I had enough to eat, that I was clothed and that I had a place to sleep. I'll never know all that they did for me, like the things they did for me when I was a baby, but

I can be grateful for the things that I know. Help me to be a grateful child, and remind me to be grateful in person. If my parents have ended their time on earth and are with you, help me to be thankful for their lives, and fill me with the hope of meeting them again in your company, where I'll be able to say thanks again.

I'm grateful for my friends, God. Even if I have only one good friend in my life right now, I'm so grateful. God, you show your love for me through my friends in ways that I sometimes overlook. They give me advice, sometimes when I need it, sometimes when I don't, which in both situations is a sign of their care for me. They listen to me complain, which I do too much, and they celebrate with me, even if things aren't always going well for them. They help me to laugh. And they help me to laugh at myself. That alone is reason to be thankful. Help me to be a good friend in return.

I'm grateful for my family, God. Yes, I know that all families are a little nutty, and mine is no exception. Even Jesus's family tree had its share of complications. But I'm thankful that, even with the nuttiness, I'm part of a family that has helped to make me the person I am. I know that they try to love me the best that they can. Help me to be a good family member, trying to help out when I can, make the phone call or pay a visit when they're lonely, and keep my mouth shut when I should be listening, or when I don't have anything sensible to add to the conversation.

I'm grateful for my job, God. It's not always a bed of roses, but at least I have a place to work and I am able to make ends meet. That's more than many people have. And I know the people I work with can drive me crazy, but they are doing their best, too. Help me to be a good co-worker, to give people the benefit of the doubt, to care for the people with whom I work, and not to take everything so seriously on the job. And help me remember that all work done freely and with a loving heart is worthy in your site.

I'm grateful, God, for all the things that I know many people in this world don't have. And that's a long list. So I'm grateful for food. And clean water that is easily

available. And clothes. And heat in the winter and air conditioning and screens in the summer. I'm grateful that I can go to the doctor and get a check up and even get shots to help me avoid illness. That's a lot more than most people have. Help me to be grateful, and help me remember that I can help those who have less by being generous. That's one way of thanking you.

Did I mention how much I appreciate all the things you created? For the color of orange autumn leaves against the deep blue sky? For the smell of the sidewalk after a thunderstorm on a hot summer afternoon? For the way that the frost makes crazy patterns on windows in the winter? For the amazing smell of daffodils in the springtime? While I'm at it, I'm also grateful for the beach (that's a pretty great thing you created), the mountains (also great) and sunsets (really great). And hamburgers, too.

Most of all, God, I'm grateful for your presence in my life. You're everywhere, and if I remember to pay attention I can see your invitation to meet you in every moment of the day. I know that it is you who turn my mind to thoughts of gratitude. And when I'm tempted to focus only on the problems and worries and fears, I know that I'm being led away from you.

Now, I'm not always as thankful as I should be, but today I am. Today I will try to be grateful all day, since you are generous all day to me, like you are every day.

Amen.



### ***Music for a Thankful Heart: Day 3:***

*"All Good Gifts"—from the musical Godspell—Sung by Merrell Jackson*

