

Living well through Advent

Week One

Wednesday 30 November 2022

Singleness of Heart

Grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart.

Book of Common Prayer, p. 365

In the opening Sunday's reflection, we learn that a practice of simplicity might mean "to focus, ... to make single." This brings to mind the excerpt above from a well-known prayer prayed each week in many churches. This short passage offers us a powerful and clear reminder that we need to call on God's strength and courage so that we may live purposefully from our hearts, from love.

"With gladness and singleness of heart" tells us how we are to love and serve. To be glad, to rejoice, requires that we pay attention to what matters most, what makes us grateful. One of the best ways we've found to nurture and strengthen all aspects of our being: heart, soul, strength, and mind, is through a simple practice of gratitude. According to Brené Brown, gratitude is "an emotion that reflects our deep appreciation for what we value, what brings meaning to our lives, and what makes us feel connected to ourselves and others." I would add what also makes us feel more connected to God.

I find it helpful to keep a gratitude journal where I write three things each day for which I am grateful. Others find it helpful simply to note throughout the day the little things for which they are thankful. However we nurture an "attitude of gratitude," we will likely discover that doing so will enhance our ability to live and love "with gladness and singleness of heart."

Consider the following suggestions about incorporating gratitude

- ◆ In what ways do you think intentionally cultivating a practice of gratitude could help you to live with more gladness: in heart, soul, strength, and mind?
- ◆ Does Brené Brown's definition help you to identify those things in life for which you are grateful?

Grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart.