

FROM THE EDGE: THANK YOU!

People often say “Thank you, for your service” to my husband, whenever he wears his ballcap with Navy written on it. They will stop him in a store or on the street just to say “thank you.” I used to trivialize all these thank you’s until the coronavirus descended on us. Now I think about this a lot, and I realize I’m not very good at saying “thank you.” I give thanks in my prayers all the time, but sometimes I forget to say “thank you” to people I take for granted, like my husband or a friend, and people I see frequently (in person or cyber space). Oh, if someone gives me something or does something for me, I always say “thank you.” It’s the everyday ordinary things I’m thinking about. With all the confusion over wearing or not wearing masks, staying home or going out, closing or opening churches and stores, I find myself saying “thank you” more than ever to complete strangers – like bus drivers, police officers, doctors and nurses, grocery clerks, and other clergy.

So, let me just say it, “Thank you.” Thank you for all the work you do as pastors, COS students, church managers, program directors, building custodians, community organizers, counselors, and thank you for what you do as wives/husbands, fathers/mothers, sisters/brothers, sons/daughters, grandparents, single parents, single clergy and as friends, and thank you for the work you do on your other jobs too, just to pay all the bills. I need to say, I want to say, “Thank you, for your service.” It’s a labor of love when you are called to serve, wherever and however you serve, and what you do makes a difference to me and the wider world.

Thank you is a simple message but it is a message that goes deeper than “Hi, how are you doing?” It touches the soul in ways that other words can’t. It says I see you. I see what you are doing and I appreciate you for your willingness to serve this way. Thank you for caring, and thank you for doing what God calls each of us to do. It gives me comfort to know that you are there doing what you do, serving God by loving others and loving God by serving others.

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them [a scholar of the law] tested him by asking, “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.” —Matthew 22:34-40

When we all learn to live these two great commandments, we will probably hear and say the simple “thank you” message a lot more, in corona and ordinary times. So, let me say it again, “Thank you, for your service.”