

NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD

by Nancy Cramer

The words of this 17th century hymn reverberate with us today the same as they must have been felt by the parishioners who sang them. The words were written by Martin Rinkart (1586-1640) and the music by Johann Cruger (1598-1662) and combined during that time period. They gratefully acknowledged God's abundance. The hymn continues "Who hat blessed us on our way..." a reminder of the blessings God bestows on us daily without our asking.

More blessings await us, some will come unexpectedly as a pleasant surprise. Others are expected and we work or plan for them so they come to fruition, such as a good marriage, a job promotion, a baby or a new house. But do we ever ask what God expects in return for the shower of blessings that can come in a lifetime? What do we owe Him? The answer has come in the form of hundreds of sermons, and you have heard dozens of them. Writers of books try to express with their words and many are successful. Others struggle with the topic.

It is the same with each of us. Some of us have found an answer, while others of us are struggling to penetrate what they see as a mystery to be solved. It is enough to commend them for trying, and with help and living, they will find the answer. For me, my answer thus far is in a few sentences. God expects us to live by the Golden Rule and to treat others as we would want to be treated. He expects us to contribute our time, talents, and resources where and when they are needed. Finally, we are to love God and His only Son, Jesus Christ.

These may not be your words or ideas but you can choose ones which enrich your life. They may change because living is a growing process from stage to stage and we try to adapt to each time period. Others have said this more fluently, so give me credit for my audacity in expressing them. I urge you to write down your own reflections on this question and think about what you have written. Something to ponder and perhaps improve upon as well as something to be pleasantly acknowledged. You might even learn something about yourself you did not know. That is a reward in itself.