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A little girl was going to a party and her mother told her to remember, when she was leaving, to thank her hostess. When she arrived home the mother asked if she had thanked her hostess and the little one replied: 'No' because the girl in front of me did, and the lady said, 'Don't mention it' – so I didn't.

Could it be said of us that we don't mention those magic words 'thank you' not nearly enough. Jesus, the Jew, praised the Samaritan leper who came back to say 'thanks' for his healing despite the fact that Samaritans and Jews normally kept their distance from each other. But gratitude is part and parcel of the language of love which draws people closer together, and irons out differences. In this context I notice our new Prime Minister has had a change of heart and don't think Mr Macron is that bad a fellow after all. It was smiles all round.

It appears to me that people with little of the world's resources are often far more appreciative of the little they have than those with plenty.

It often amazes me when I see the smiling happy faces of children in other parts of the world who live in shanty towns and have scarcely enough to eat. St Philip Neri once said: *'I cried because I had no shoes until I saw a man without any feet.'*

One little boy from a war weary country recently, when asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, shouted – 'ALIVE'. Do we thank God for the gift of life? Many people who have given up on life don't think it's worth living. Suicide among the young is very worrying.

Life itself is a gift and this awareness should greatly influence the way we see it. This especially applies to life in the womb.

Today sadly, for too many people pre-born life is not sacred. At the moment of our conception, God implanted in us an immortal soul so that we could share forever in His life. But children are not always seen as gifts of God.

Older pupils these days are often taught in their relationship education class how not to conceive at all costs as if fertility were a disease and not God's gift to us. God made a mistake in the way he designed our bodies and we have to correct His mistake through artificial means. Self-control, one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, scarcely gets a mention.

In the baptismal ceremony whilst praying over the mother we say: "she now thanks God for the gift of her child, may she be one with him or her in thanking God forever in Heaven". But we need to thank him on earth as well. We do this by upholding and revering life from the womb to the tomb and by treasuring and protecting this beautiful God-given world with its rich biodiversity, the decline of which threatens human life on Earth.

Eucharist means praise and thanksgiving so when we come together for Mass there is no better time for thanking God for his many gifts to us, not least the gift of human life, but even more so the gift of Eternal Life which his Son won for us on the Cross without which life would be bereft of meaning.