

## PART 1



Thank you a very important word – it involves gratitude – a recognition that someone has done something for us

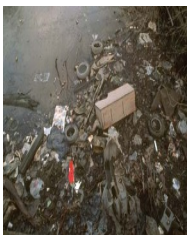
that someone has given us something that we value

It makes us feel good – good about ourselves – good about what we have received



Lesson reminds us of ingratitude – of not saying thank you – that what we have received – that what has been given to us is ours thank you very much.

Trouble with ingratitude is that we no longer value what we have been given – we don't treat it as a gift



Rivers are meant to flow clean, provide water fit for people to drink, in which they can wash – all too often they are treated like rubbish tips



The air we breathe – clean air – free from pollution, from poisons from factories, from traffic – we have filled it with pollution from our cars, from our factories, we have changed the atmosphere of this earth so that we are now beginning to change the climate.

Let us not forget who gave us this beautiful earth and let us be thankful.

## **PART 2**

So let us be thankful



We give thanks today for all the blessings of harvest. In the decorations of this Church, in our prayers, in our gifts we will be reminded of all the good things we enjoy.

As we watch our TV screens we are conscious that not all are as blessed as we are. Over this weekend we have been worried that our water supply may be reduced. But in other parts of the world drought, real drought is a harsh reality. In sub Saharan Africa the desert is advancing, in other parts the rains have failed.



Land where once farmers were able to graze their cattle and grow crops is now dried up. For us a dry spell is an inconvenience, our lawns dry out, our plants don't do as well. For farmers such as this it brings disaster, the loss of their cattle, the loss of their livelihood – how are they to care for their families?



How are we to be thankful? Part of our thankfulness is in a willingness to care – part of that care is in contributing to emergency appeals such as the one after the earthquake in Haiti. But care must go deeper – our care must enable people to stand on their own two feet – that is why schemes such as Bothar and the Christian Aid gift catalogue at Christmas are so valuable.

We must recognise that there is a severe trade imbalance between the rich and the poor which leave producers of crops poorly paid while producers in the West make profits on products such as coffee and chocolate – we cannot single handedly change world trade structures but we can where possible buy Fair Trade products in our shops.

So let us be truly thankful and show that thankfulness in concern for others.

### **PART 3**

Have you ever wondered what goes in to the production of our food and the many commodities we all enjoy? A few weeks ago there was an accident in a coal mine in Wales in which four men died, a reminder of the risks others have to take to bring us our fuel.

I remember just after I came here walking the pier one morning and watching a boat out in the bay pulling up lobster pots. It was a cold wet windy day and the sea was rough and I remember thinking ‘You would want to be getting a good price for your lobsters on a day like that.’

Or we go to the fish shop and there is not much variety and we complain that there is not much in and forget the conditions in which the men who bring us our fish have to work.



The memorial down near the yacht club is a silent reminder of those who have set out to sea and have not come back, leaving behind parents, wives, children, friends. This year we have very deliberately included a maritime flavour in our harvest decoration to remind us of those in our own community who harvest the sea.

We remember also those who care for them on our behalf, the crews of the lifeboats who go out in all weathers to go to the aid of those at sea.



So let us be truly thankful this day.

Thankful to the God who has given us this beautiful, fruitful earth to enjoy and to sustain us.

Let us show our gratitude in caring for this earth and sharing our good things with those who have none.

Let us be thankful to those who labour on the land to bring us our food, those who work in mines and on oil and gas rigs to bring us our fuel and those who go out from this village of Howth to gather our fish from the sea.