

University of Michigan psychology professor Chris Peterson regularly had his students write what he called a “gratitude letter.” This was a belated “thank you” to someone in their life.

His studies showed that writing a thank you letter provided a long-lasting mood boost to those who wrote them. Peterson noted that his students felt better 100% of the time after writing these letters.

Peterson himself noted how difficult it was for him to write thank you letters. But even making a list of things a person is grateful for can provide an increase in well-being.

In today’s Gospel we hear of the woman who interrupts a party to show appreciation to Jesus in a very demonstrative way. Her gratitude is so far out of the social context of the time, that the host of the party misses the point, and judges Jesus for her out-of-the-ordinary behavior.

Jesus points out that those who have been forgiven much, will “show great love” while those “to whom little is forgiven, [will] love little.”

In the Epistle, St. Paul documents his own history - and recounts how much he has been forgiven and how much God’s grace is responsible for his transformation.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for an increase in our own gratitude ... gratitude to God as well as friends, family, and coworkers. The Greek word for the Mass is “Eucharist” which implies an act of thanksgiving. As we continue in this great prayer of thanksgiving - the Eucharist - may we give thanks to God and each other.