

# From The Pews | Defeating Fear by Turning Toward Gratitude

November is month where our hearts and minds turn toward gratitude, but I'm finding it difficult this year to make that turn.

The reports of [bombings aimed at Trump critics](#) and the [refusal of the White House administration to name these activities as terrorism](#) sound like reports from another country, not America.

The reports that the number of [immigrant children who are being detained has skyrocketed](#) and that refugees marching [thousands of miles for the hope of a different life](#) only to be [preemptively refused entry](#) into the United States before they've arrived and had their asylum claims vetted are heartbreaking.

That's not even mentioning the bitter, vicious rhetoric being spewed on both sides of the political aisle as we near [midterm elections](#), or the fact that whole communities have been destroyed by some of [the fiercest hurricanes](#) we have ever seen come ashore in our nation.

Is there anything right now in our country for which we can be grateful? Is there any reason for us to hold onto hope?

If you are someone who follows the news, you may be quick to answer, "No." If you don't follow the news or have taken a much-needed break from social media or news outlets, you may be quick to answer, "I can't even right now."

Both responses express a deep concern permeating our country. We are in a paralysis.

We are so overwhelmed with negativity that we are stuck in worry and anxiety about the future of our country, what the election outcomes will be, and what kind of future we are creating for our children that we can't do anything. We are stuck.

We are tired. We are lost.

We have seen the power of hatred and bitterness spreading from one person to the other.

We have opened our eyes to see the brokenness that surrounds us. And we froze. We got stuck. We hid under the covers hoping it would go away.

It is a dangerous place to be stuck in paralysis because it means we have lost sight of the resources we have within us as individuals. We have forgotten the sheer power of community.

If you have ever been in a car that has lost power steering, you know how difficult it can be to turn the wheel when you are fighting against a broken system.

However, fight you must if you want to turn that car toward the shop to get it fixed.

This is exactly what we must do. We must roll up our sleeves, stand up and get ready to dig down deep into the well of resources that are within us as individuals and as a community.

Deep within us resides the Divine, miraculous breath. This breath that brought order out of chaos in Genesis still holds creative power.

We must resist the urge to give into the hatred, bitterness and violence closing in and instead breathe new life into our communities. It's time to turn things around.

We must turn toward gratitude for each other, even when we don't agree with each other.

We must turn toward hope, even when things look hopeless. We must turn toward helping, even when the situation looks dire.

We must turn away from paralysis into the full understanding that [we are the people](#) who are responsible for change.