

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

*Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

A few days ago Becky and I quietly celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary. After 50 years we needed little fanfare to appreciate our relationship.

I did take pause to reflect on how through the years, we allowed our relationship with God and our Savior to individually and as a couple develop to where we continually gave thanks for our many blessings.

Sometimes it's difficult to remember that God does not guarantee believers a life free from problems and sorrow. But, he does promise to always be there to help us face the difficulties of life. For this, we give thanks.

*Prayer:* Dear Lord, We celebrate our journey together that started so many years ago – and so many plans ago – and so many dreams ago.

We celebrate all the joys birthed in these 50 years. We celebrate all our happy times, all our accomplishments, and all our triumphs. Thank you, Lord, for blessing us.

We have had to survive many heartaches. Yet we have always chosen to stay together and weather each storm as man and wife. Thank you, Lord, for protecting us and our marriage.

We ask, Lord, that you would continue to protect us, and guide us as we go forth from this 50th-anniversary celebration.

We smile with joy as we reach out this day to find each other's hands and touch each other's hearts. Amen.

-Submitted by John Shoemaker for the Thirty-second Reading of Lent