

What to do about ingratitude?

By Narelle Hanratty

Review of *The Courage to face Ingratitude ... and other indignities* by Gregory Hake

We all know the pain of ingratitude, yet it is rarely discussed. Gregory Hake has remedied that curious absence with his reflections on the nature and consequences of ingratitude.

Hake was inspired after discovering a long forgotten author, William Charles Jordan who, more than 100 years ago, wrote about the matter of ingratitude with extraordinary acuity and power. Jordan's insights nurtured Hake's thinking, and the result is this compendium in which the voices of Jordan and Hake intertwine to give the reader inspiration and comfort in dealing with this challenge.

Those who are leaders in their organisations, their communities, their families or any other arena of life will find the reflections particularly useful, because dealing with ingratitude is one of the consequences of leading. The bigger one's life, the more ingratitude one encounters. Therefore, learning how to be in the face of it should be a vital preparation for leadership and other large endeavours.

How can we be in the face of ingratitude?

Hake gives several answers, and two of them spoke to me deeply. The first is to understand that our acts of love and service, though they may appear to go unacknowledged, "come back to us in some form as naturally, as perfectly, as inevitably, as echo answers to sound." They may not return immediately, or in a form we foresaw, but they do return.

The second is to live from the idea of gratitude at the level of possibility, to live from the place that each day we are adding or subtracting to the store of kindness and gratitude in the world. Each day, as Jordan states, we are

indebted to thousands for the comforts, joys, consolations, and blessings of life.

If you have ever gone the extra mile or performed an act at some great effort and received only blank looks, or worse, criticism or denial, then this is the book for you. It will restore you and give you courage.