

From Your Pastor

*"We Come to You, Father, with Praise and Thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ Your Son."**

This past Thursday our families and friends gathered for Thanksgiving. The first Thanksgiving in Massachusetts took place 388 years ago in 1621. Having survived the grueling three-month ordeal of crossing the Atlantic, as well as losing more than half of the original 102 colonists during their first year in America, the Pilgrims gave thanks to God following the modest first harvest they reaped in a new land. Given the sufferings they endured and the little they had, the words of Edward Winslow, written to a friend in England about that first Thanksgiving, are especially poignant:

And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.**

Thanksgiving is a time for us to remember, both as a nation and as individuals, how good God has been to us. Giving thanks should come easy to us, because as Catholics we have been bred to offer thanks to God. You know that the Eucharist we celebrate every Sunday (and daily) is the source and the summit of our discipleship in Jesus Christ. Did you know that the word "Eucharist" comes from the Greek word "*eucharistein*," which means, "to give thanks?" Every Mass is both a reliving of the saving sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary for us *and* an act of thanks to God both for this redemptive act of love – and for all the grace and gifts that flow from it to us and through us. How prophetic were the words of the Psalmist, prayed several hundred years before Christ:

What return can I make to the Lord for his goodness to me?

I will raise the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. (*Ps 116*)

For the Christian, giving thanks is empty if it does not nurture within us a deep desire to wish that others be "partakers in our plenty." Just as Jesus gave his life without reserve for our salvation, so we are called to give our lives and our fortunes to those in need. Following the Lord's example, we are called to give not merely from our surplus but from our core. This, in fact, is the sentiment of the Opening Prayer that the Church prayed at Mass on Thanksgiving Day:

Father all-powerful,
your gifts of love are countless
and your goodness infinite.
On Thanksgiving Day we come before
you with gratitude for your kindness;
Open our hearts to concern for our
fellow men and women, so that we
may share your gifts in loving service.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Let us thank God for the modern-day examples we know and have known who have lived the truth of this prayer: our parents and guardians; the men and women of our military; our teachers and health care providers; our civil servants, especially those in our fire, emergency and police departments; our true friends; and so many more. They teach us, after the example of Jesus, that in the end it is love that gives reason to thanksgiving; and that true thanksgiving always gives birth to love.

I hope that your Thanksgiving this year was rich in giving thanks – and in giving lovingly, like the Lord Jesus. Happy Thanksgiving Weekend!



God bless each of you.

Mrs. Fay

*Opening words of Eucharistic Prayer I.

**Edward Winslow, Plymouth, in New England, this 11th of December, 1621. in A RELATION OR Journal of the beginning and proceedings of the English Plantation settled at Plymouth in NEW ENGLAND, by certain English Adventurers both Merchants and others. LONDON, Printed for John Bellamie, 1622. pp. 60-61. Adapted to modern English.