



Thanksgiving

During November we think more about giving thanks. On Thanksgiving we recall the wondrous deeds of Almighty God, we give Him thanks for His goodness and we celebrate with a special feast. Our first President, George Washington, called on the entire nation to unite most humbly to offer prayers to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and ask Him for forgiveness for the sins of our nation and ourselves.

Did you know that, as Catholics, we celebrate Thanksgiving every time we celebrate the Mass?

During the Introductory Rite, we begin our thanks in the Gloria when we say “we give You thanks for your great glory”. We confess that we are sinners and ask God to “take away the sins of the world” and “have mercy on us”.

The Liturgy of the Word “*makes a remembrance of the marvelous works of God and inspires thanksgiving and praise*” (Catholic Catechism, Paragraph 1103). After the Old and New Testament readings, we are so inspired we respond “Thanks be to God!”. When the Gospel is read, we are reminded of the marvelous stories and love of our Lord Jesus Christ. We offer thanks by responding “Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ!”.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the Presentation of the Gifts. We are thankful that God provides us with bread and wine to offer to Him as a sacrifice. The priest says “Let us give thanks to the Lord” and we respond “It is right and just”. The priest reminds us that we are to give thanks more than one day a year or even one day a week, saying “It is truly right and just, our duty and salvation, always and everywhere to give You thanks”.

The Sacrament of the Eucharist, or Communion, is our ultimate Thanksgiving feast. “*It is called: Eucharist, because it is an action of thanksgiving to God*” (Catholic Catechism, 1328). The word Eucharist comes from the Greek word eucharistein, meaning thanksgiving – as to proclaim blessings during a meal.

The Sacrament of the Eucharist is also called the Lord’s Supper. It is our special and sacred feast of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. “*We must therefore consider the Eucharist as: thanksgiving and praise to the Father, the sacrificial memorial of Christ and his Body, the presence of Christ by the power of his word and of his Spirit*”. (Catholic Catechism, 1358).

Many people travel, even long distances, to be with family to celebrate Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is more special when celebrated with family and friends. Some Catholics say, “God is in my heart, so I do not need to go to Mass”. Catholics should look forward to attending Mass and be united with their Parish Family, as we all raise our voices as one to give thanks and receive the feast of our Lord’s Salvation in the Holy Eucharist. Similar to your Thanksgiving celebration, if you know of anyone who is not joining us in the celebration of the Mass, please invite them to the banquet. How much more would our celebration be special with our friends and family?

Thanks be to God. It is right and just.

Meditation:

- Have I given thanks to God today?
- Do I spend time alone with God every day to offer thanks? If not, why?
- Do I attend Mass each week to give thanks as the body of Christ? What is my attitude about Mass?
- Do I give thanks and celebrate the Mass...just say the words...or just watch? is Mass only an obligation?
- When I hear God’s wondrous stories in the readings am I thankful for His love, power and deeds?
- Is the Eucharist my ultimate Thanksgiving feast? Do I look forward to receive our Lord in the Eucharist?
- Do I encourage others to join in the celebration of our most holy thanksgiving at Mass?