

THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PASTOR: Giving Thanks

This week, of course, contains the civic observance of “Thanksgiving Day”. It has been a long-standing custom in our nation to observe this day, and, though there is some historical debate about it, it is said to have its origins with the Pilgrims in their early years of settling Plymouth Colony in the 1620’s. They desired, it seems, to give thanks to God for blessings upon them despite their years of hardship, fleeing, as they were, persecution in England, and finding themselves in a new land with many struggles and challenges. Indeed, it is known for certain that a full one-half of the original 102 passengers of the Mayflower died during the first winter of 1620-21. Their experience took on new meaning for me several years ago when I discovered that two of them were my ancestors: James Chilton (the oldest passenger) and his wife, whose name is not recorded. Sadly, they both were among those who died that first winter. Even though the pilgrims, as puritan “separatists” during the English Reformation, were highly anti-Catholic in their views (we often forget how many Catholics – including priests - were tortured and killed in England during this time, and how Mass had to be celebrated in secret), we might still admire the pilgrims for their spirit of sacrifice, tenacity, and deep faith in God in the midst of enormous trials. Their beliefs in self-governance and personal liberties laid the foundation for their descendants, 4 generations later, to fight a Revolution and to draft our Constitution. They believed in God, and they were grateful.

That’s what we Catholics have always been about: believing in God, and being thankful. In fact, the word “eucharist” comes from the Greek which means just that: “giving thanks”. Every Mass, indeed, is an experience of giving thanks to God in the Eucharistic Real Presence of Jesus Christ, the one through whom we experience *true freedom* from Satan, *true liberation* from sin, and *eternal hope* for a “new land”: not Massachusetts (as wonderful as that state might be...), but rather Heaven. And like the pilgrims, along our journey in this life toward Heaven, we constantly endure trials and hardships; sufferings and set-backs. As one example, consider the serious issues of scandal all of us in the Church have had to endure this past year as the result of the actions of a few. But in the midst of these sufferings, including our personal struggles in the life, we still claim our hope in Christ, and we still, like the pilgrims, look to the blessings we have received from God. And we continue, at each and every Holy Mass, to give thanks: to offer the Holy Eucharist, in a spirit of trust, surrender, and love to God through Jesus. May this Thanksgiving be an occasion not only of deepening our bonds with fellow citizens of our great Republic, but also of deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ in the Holy Mass. Thanks be to God!

Fr. Ferguson is available to help you with any questions or concerns you may have; please contact him at hamilton.college@outlook.com or at 419-634-2626.

THOUGHTS FOR OUR PARISH CHILDREN by “Jackie”, the Pastor’s Cat



Hi boys and girls! My name is “Jackie”, and as you know, I am Father Ferguson’s cat! Ooooh! Ooooh! I am all excited! That’s right! Father says that Thanksgiving is only a few days away! And you know, to us cats, Thanksgiving means...FOOD! I can hardly sleep (that says a lot for a cat...) because I can hardly wait to sink my fangs into some roasted turkey (we cats love to eat birds, and turkeys are BIG birds!), with sides of tuna casserole with tuna gravy (yum!), breaded mouse nuggets (to die for!), salmon patties (kids, salmon means FISH!), and catnip/grass salad (got to have your veggies!). I’ve been bouncing off walls and jumping on furniture just waiting for Thanksgiving to come! But Father says that I’m missing the true meaning of Thanksgiving. He says that it’s not about stuffing your cheeks full of food, but it’s about giving thanks to God for all the blessings He gives to us and to our nation! Well, I suppose he’s right. I thank God for creating me, for living in a great country, and for a good home. For what do you wish to give God thanks this week on Thanksgiving? (besides mouse nuggets!) Have a “purr”-fect week!