

November 25, 2021
Thanksgiving Day
Sir 50:22-24
Ps 145:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-11
1 Cor 1:3-9
Lk 17:11-19

WHAT AM I THANKFUL FOR?

A teacher asked her students to write a composition entitled, "**What I am thankful for on Thanksgiving.**" One of the students wrote, "**I am thankful that I am not a turkey.**"

Kidding aside, **what are you thankful for the past eleven (11) months?**

Personally, these past eleven (11) months, though challenging, there are lots of blessings I am thankful for. Let me mention some of it.

1. I am thankful to God for blessing us with the new parish hall. For the past five (5) years it was just a dream and now it is a reality. It was through God's guidance that we were able to make it.
2. I am thankful to God for blessing us to be debt-free. We did not incur debt in building our new parish hall. It is truly a relief to finish a project without taking loans.
3. I am thankful to God for blessing us with generous parishioners and visitors. You are the reason why our parish is debt-free in spite of this pandemic. Without the generosity of God's people, we will not be able to accomplish that beautiful space for our faith community.
4. I am thankful to God for blessing us with new ministries in our faith community. We have more parishioners now trying their best to be stewards of the Gospel. New parishioners joining the ministry gives me joy and hope for our parish.
5. I am thankful to God for the blessing us with courageous faith-sharers, our catechists. Despite of their busy schedules they don't hesitate to share the faith to our young people in the parish.
6. I am thankful to God for blessing us with deacons and nuns in our faith community. They are, indeed, helping our faith community become a stewardship parish. They are so generous in sharing their gifts for the advancement of God's kingdom here on earth.
7. I am thankful to God for blessing us with stewards who are always willing to extend their helping hands to make our Church beautiful – the new lights and ceiling fans, for example, were installed labor-free!
8. I am thankful to God for blessing us with the opportunity to help other parishes. Some of our parish leaders were tapped by the Diocese to help in

our Kauai Vicariate. They are very generous in sharing their time, talent, and treasure so other parishes can learn the best practices we are doing here in our community. In return, we learn from them too.

9. I am thankful to God for everything – the blessings and challenges we have encountered in our faith community the past eleven (11) months. I am very thankful to God for being true to his promise that with Him all things are possible!

Our gospel acclamation from the 1st Letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians tells us: **“In all circumstances, give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”** St. Paul is very clear with his words – he is encouraging us to be grateful people in all circumstances. He is urging us to cultivate an attitude of gratitude. **Why?** It is simply because the attitude of gratitude will surely help us live our lives with joy.

Last week I received a book from Augustine Institute entitled: **“LIVING JOY: 9 Rules to help you rediscover and live joy every day.”** written by Chris Stefanick. As I was browsing the book the first thing I saw were the words: GIVE THANKS! The author was conveying to his readers that to live joy every day the first (1st) rule is to GIVE THANKS. He was suggesting that we begin our day counting what we are grateful for. He mentioned that trials can also help trigger gratitude in us. He recommended to say “Thank you” often throughout the day.

Looks simple, **right?** In reality, it is not! It is not easy to be grateful when we are used to seeing the negative rather than the positive in our journey. It is not easy to be grateful when we are engulfed with jealousy or envy. It is not easy to be grateful when we are consumed with self-pity/depression. It is not easy to be grateful when we are not deeply rooted in God.

And so, what is the challenge/invitation of this Thanksgiving Day for us, Catholics? We are being challenged/invited today to continue nurturing the attitude of gratitude in our hearts so we can live our lives with joy every day. Let us be mindful though that nurturing this behavior of gratefulness happens when we are always connected to the Vine, Jesus Christ. Therefore, let us make a conscious effort to be always connected to him. **Why?** It is simply because a heart bursting with gratitude is in itself his gift!

As we continue our Eucharistic celebration, let us pause for a moment of silence and let our hearts say to the Lord Jesus: **Thank you, Lord, for everything!**

God bless and stay safe!

