

Thanksgiving Day

November 22, 2012

I like Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving for me is filled with warm and happy memories. First of all, there is the memory of that first Thanksgiving. Some of it may be legend, but at the heart of it we know they were immigrant people, foreigners like the Samaritan in the Gospel. Immigrants. And the natives welcomed them and helped them and celebrated with them. And they had much to celebrate and be thankful for on the first Thanksgiving. They had been through hard times. Those of us who through our lifetime have been through hard times can appreciate that.

Most of my Thanksgiving memories are of Thanksgiving Day as I was growing up. Growing up then was a little bit different. You will not believe this. There was no football on Thanksgiving Day. Now how could they have Thanksgiving without football? But in those days they did. My happy memories include first of all turkey. I love turkey and turkey dressing and gravy. And I look forward to cold turkey sandwiches the next day. So there were memories of Thanksgiving dinner and personal memories of extended family. It was one of the times during the year where we gathered, not just the immediate family, but even Effie Flint, the mean old lady across the street from our house. And there were always one or two garbage men who were out of work. My grandmother and my great half-aunt were there, and they didn't like each other. But those are great memories of Thanksgiving Day. And I look forward to turkey dinner this evening at my sister Susan's house with her two boys and my mother and Sister Joyce.

We also have memories as a nation because this is a national holiday. We remember as a nation when we celebrate this Thanksgiving Day good times and hard times. We remember this nation went through a great depression and we have echoes of it today. This nation went through mighty wars and we have echoes of war today. This nation has gone through years of peace and also years of dissent and division. We have memories but we also have challenges.

As we gather for this Thanksgiving we think of immigrants again. This time not Pilgrims but people from other lands and other shores who may or may not be made welcome. We think of people undergoing foreclosures and lay-offs and economic hard times and how long lines are now for food and shelter in downtown Seattle. But also we celebrate Thanksgiving because this is still more than anything else a land of promise and a land of hope. And I want us to think and pray about that.

I'm going to suggest we spend a little quiet time thinking of blessings in our life before we gather around our Thanksgiving table, our Eucharistic table, for this Thanksgiving Day. Let's take a few moments to remember what we are thankful for. Think in quiet now what you are thankful for about our country despite our disagreements and division. What about our nation are you thankful for?

And, second, think about our church despite the fact that at times it is possibly embarrassing to us and upsets us. But think at the same time what we are thankful for and what we are grateful for in our church. What am I thankful for about my church – Christ Our Hope Church and the whole Catholic Church?

And the final area is our personal life, our families and friends. Sometimes they can be difficult. Sometimes they are distant. But take a few moments and think about your personal life and family and friends for whom you are now most thankful for.

And now let us stand and make our prayers thanking God indeed for all these blessings in our lives.

Paul A. Magnano

Pastor