

LITURGY

Liturgy Bytes—Happy Thanksgiving



Do you realize that Thanksgiving and Eucharist mean the same thing? Even though it has been pointed out many times in the past, it does not hurt to reflect on it once again as we get ready to celebrate Thanksgiving Day on November 23rd.

The word “thanksgiving” is derived from the Greek word “eucharist,” which is the same word that refers to both the Mass and the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It is also wonderful to see and know that many Catholics start their Thanksgiving Day by attending Mass in their parishes. Here at Holy Cross, we will have Mass on Thanksgiving morning at 9:00. We encourage everyone who is available to join your parish family to offer thanks before you join your family members.

Returning to the meaning of Eucharist, we should realize that the whole liturgical life of the Church revolves around the Mass and the Sacraments. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains it this way: “It is called Eucharist because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek words eucharistein and eulogein recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim, especially during a meal, God's works of creation, redemption and sanctification.” This sacrament is called the Eucharist precisely because it is a thanksgiving offered to God for these gifts. The Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life and as such, it is the highest form of thanksgiving that we can offer. As we know, there is a meal aspect to the Eucharist that provides a connection to our secular holiday of Thanksgiving. The Eucharist is much more than a common meal. The Eucharist is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father, a blessing by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God for everything He has given us, the things we know and those we do not know. Are we not so blessed to have the opportunity to receive Our Lord on many more occasions than just once a year each time we attend Mass? Make an effort to start your Thanksgiving Day celebration this year with Mass.

Have a safe, blessed, and healthy week ahead! ~~ *Michele Hall*