

**November 22, 2012
Thanksgiving Day**

Readings, Suggested Homily Notes, and Prayers of the Faithful

Readings

Reading 1 Sir 50:22-24

And now, bless the God of all,
who has done wondrous things on earth;
Who fosters people's growth from their mother's womb,
and fashions them according to his will!
May he grant you joy of heart
and may peace abide among you;
May his goodness toward us endure in Israel
to deliver us in our days.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 145:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-11

R. (see 1) I will praise your name for ever, Lord.

Every day will I bless you,
and I will praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the LORD and highly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.

R. I will praise your name for ever, Lord.

Generation after generation praises your works
and proclaims your might.
They speak of the splendor of your glorious majesty
and tell of your wondrous works.

R. I will praise your name for ever, Lord.

They discourse of the power of your terrible deeds
and declare your greatness.

They publish the fame of your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your justice.

R. I will praise your name for ever, Lord.

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.

The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

R. I will praise your name for ever, Lord.

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.

Let them discourse of the glory of your Kingdom
and speak of your might.

R. I will praise your name for ever, Lord.

Reading 2 1 Cor 1:3-9

Brothers and sisters:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always on your account
for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus,
that in him you were enriched in every way,
with all discourse and all knowledge,
as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you,
so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift
as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
He will keep you firm to the end,
irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
God is faithful,
and by him you were called to fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gospel Lk 17:11-19

As Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem,
he traveled through Samaria and Galilee.
As he was entering a village, ten persons with leprosy met him.
They stood at a distance from him and raised their voices, saying,
“Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!”
And when he saw them, he said,
“Go show yourselves to the priests.”
As they were going they were cleansed.
And one of them, realizing he had been healed,
returned, glorifying God in a loud voice;
and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him.
He was a Samaritan.
Jesus said in reply,
“Ten were cleansed, were they not?
Where are the other nine?
Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?”
Then he said to him, “Stand up and go;
your faith has saved you.”

Suggested Homily Notes**First Reading**

Today’s First Reading praises God and expresses thanks for all that he does. The reading prays for God’s continued blessings on all, so that his grace and strength might assist us.

The reading calls attention to the reality that from the very beginning in our mother's womb, we have an inherent dignity that is worthy of protection. That God cares for us and aids us from our very beginning. Many of us might feel burdened by the struggles that the world brings. We might feel invisible or ignored by those around us, much like the unseen child in its mother's womb. But we can take comfort in the fact that God gives us loving care and protection, even when we do not ask. Just as he cares for the least among us, so too does he care for each of us.

Second Reading

The Second Reading focuses on the spiritual gifts that come from God. St. Paul reminds us that all good things come from God, including the grace that assists and deepens our love.

God's faithfulness includes a call for believers in Christ to enter into a relationship with him. We are promised that the gift of faith will assist us in our efforts to love God and others. God will help us to remain firm in our faith. In this way, we will wait joyfully for the coming of Christ the Savior.

The Gospel Reading

In today's Gospel Reading from Luke, Jesus heals ten lepers, but only one returns to thank him. The story highlights the need for an attitude of gratefulness and interior conversion.

In Jesus' time, lepers were considered unclean and not worthy of full participation in society. Note the contrast between Jesus' words that distinguish between the exterior cleanliness and the interior salvation of the lepers. Jesus notes that all were "cleansed," but only the leper who returns in loving gratitude is declared "saved" by Jesus.

Thanksgiving Day

In this Eucharist, we also recall how Christ continues to cleanse and save us—through our faithful calling to mind and celebration of his shedding his blood on the Cross and rising from the dead. That, of course, is our greatest reason for being thankful today: Christ's death and resurrection remains for us despite anything else we must endure in this life. All that we have comes from God (our loving Father). But the gifts of God come with responsibility, expectations and an obligation to share God's goodness with others.

Thanksgiving Day is not only about showing gratitude for what we have been given, but it is also about recognizing those who are in need, particularly the hungry and the poor. We are called to respond to those in need.

Religious Freedom and Conscience Rights

One of the greatest gifts from God that is knit into our very human nature from our first moment of existence is the gift of freedom. We are grateful that the founders of our nation recognized that such God-given freedom includes religious freedom. It cannot be taken away by any governmental authority. The founders of this nation gave up all that they had and risked death for the freedom of a new land where they could live and worship as they chose.

As our Church teaches: "... *the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.*" *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 2.

While our exterior freedom might be taken away or threatened, no government can ever take away our interior freedom.

Our right to religious liberty includes the obligation to protect it. This is a fitting way to express our appreciation of the tremendous gift. Let us be grateful that we still have it.

Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) (Choose as many as appropriate)

Celebrant:

Thankful for our freedom in Christ and mindful of the responsibility it brings us, let us present our prayers, interceding for all in need, as we respond, *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Deacon/Reader:

For the Holy Father, all bishops, priests, deacons, and religious, that God continues to give them the perseverance and strength to faithfully lead and guide their flock, *we pray to the Lord...*

For the Church, that the members of the Body of Christ continue to boldly speak the truth, *we pray to the Lord...*

That all people of good will grow in greater appreciation for God's gifts of life and religious liberty, *we pray to the Lord...*

For increased recognition that every good gift comes from God, *we pray to the Lord...*

For the hungry, that their spiritual and materials needs be met by the loving care of those around them, *we pray to the Lord...*

For the poor, that their physical and spiritual needs will be abundantly met in ways that reflect their inherent dignity, this Thanksgiving Day and always, *we pray to the Lord...*

That each of us, through the Holy Spirit, might grow in generosity toward others and give generously of our time, treasure and talent to those who are in need, *we pray to the Lord...*

For the members of this parish, that we continue to be good stewards of God's many gifts in order to build up a more loving and just community, *we pray to the Lord...*

For all people of faith, that they remain courageous and bold in their efforts to protect religious liberty, *we pray to the Lord...*

For all people of faith, that they be inspired to spread the goodness of God's many gifts to all, *we pray to the Lord...*

That in our efforts to defend religious liberty, we may each discover what it means to be fully human, *we pray to the Lord...*

For all people of this nation, that they might recognize that the right to religious liberty is necessary for the common good, *we pray to the Lord...*

For Catholic social service agencies, charities and hospitals, that they might remain free to operate according to the teachings of the faith, *we pray to the Lord...*

Celebrant:

**Almighty eternal God,
from whom all good things come,
look with favor, we pray, upon our needs
and, seeing the gratitude we bring today for your blessings,
strengthen us to walk more truly in the freedom of your children.
Through Christ our Lord.**