

We Are People of the Eucharist

Towards a renewed love for Holy Communion

Reflections on the Eucharist
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Thanksgiving, a Celebration of the Family

Thanksgiving Day, celebrated in Canada in the month of October, has its historical roots in religious and cultural traditions, giving thanks to God for the blessing of the harvest and graces received during the year.

While not a liturgical feast listed among the holydays of the Church, the spirit of thanksgiving underlies everything we do as Christians. Jesus said, “Give to others, and God will give to you... The measure you use for others is the one that God will use for you” (Luke 6: 38).

In other words, generosity is giving from the heart; and thanksgiving is gratitude for that generosity.

Thanksgiving is a celebration of the family. Whatever your family thanksgiving traditions are, thanksgiving is an opportunity for family to gather together, to feast and to enjoy each other’s company. And it is an occasion to show gratitude to God and to each other.

When I was younger, I found a special card for Father’s Day. Well, not exactly a Thanksgiving Card, but it expressed my sentiments of thanksgiving for my dad’s love, guidance, and nurturing throughout my childhood. It went something like this: On the cover of the card, “Dad, when I think of all the food you put on the table, the clothes on my back, and the roof over my head...”, and in the inside of the card, “Why did I ever leave home?!!” The card was my way of thanking my dad for giving me life and helping me to grow in his love and in the love of God into the person I’ve become.

As you gather this Thanksgiving, carry on your family traditions, or start some new ones. For example, in the time leading up to Thanksgiving, volunteer time as a family at a soup kitchen, visit a sick child or an elderly person, or invite a stranger or forgotten relative over for dinner. At the thanksgiving table, give everyone a chance to say one thing for which they are grateful. Include a prayer to God of thanksgiving.

Most importantly, attend Church as a family to show your gratefulness to God. After all, the word “thanksgiving” comes from the Greek word *eucharistia*, which literally means thanksgiving.

Eucharist. Thanksgiving. Imagine that.

In the Eucharist, God gives thanks for us by sharing the gift of God’s son, Jesus Christ, and, in turn, we give thanks to God by receiving God’s love in the Eucharist, which is Jesus’ body and blood.

We are people of the Eucharist.

