



Thanksgiving 2025

With weather that seems reminiscent of June, than October, it's hard to believe we are approaching Thanksgiving. This summer we saw drought, and with the state of the economy, many people gave up the idea of travelling for a summer vacation. Given all this, coupled with the state of the world - a land war in Europe, the Middle East in turmoil yet again, mass movements of world populations - the days in which we live can seem to many people to be rather bleak. How, in the midst of such times, do we maintain a spirit of gratitude within us?

I often find great solace and focus in the words of that early twentieth century prayer attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr called 'the serenity prayer', especially the line in it which petitions, 'God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change'. If we give too much energy and passion in our lives over to things for which we have no control or influence, we can create distress and anxiety in our souls. Or to put in differently, if we focus only on negative things, distressing things, then it is natural that we would find ourselves becoming a negative and distressed person.

It seems to me that no matter what, there are things in our lives and in our world that are good, and positive, and uplifting. In each of our lives, even when our journey takes us through dark valleys, there are things for which we can be thankful. I am thankful I can turn a tap and drink the water that comes out of it. I am thankful there are grocery stores in which I can buy food, and I am not required to either forage or hunt in order to eat. I am thankful for the people in my life. I am thankful for communities of Christians, and our Christian faith, who inspire all of us to be the best version of ourselves we can possibly be. I am thankful for how passionately invested members of our own Christian family at St. Thomas' are in our parish, and the legacy that has been handed down to us. Even when we disagree, sometimes vehemently, we can surely be thankful for the depth of commitment and passion we see in one another for our common inheritance and our common faith. That's true of us, isn't it? Even when we may disagree over this or that issue? Apathy is a death knell for any organization, and we can be thankful when we see an absence of apathy.

When we use the language, and see in our culture language used, of 'diversity', or 'inclusivity', I sometimes get a bit confused as its often used in a more 'Orwellian' way, than what those words actually mean. Diversity is about different ways, different views, different opinions. Inclusivity is about including ALL people, not just those with whom we agree. Our society is becoming more and more polarized the more these words are used deceptively as some sort of code by which differing views or insights, often deeply held and articulately expressed, are excluded and rejected without even conversation or intellectual inquiry and critique. So many these days seem so ideologically obsessed they can't 'hear' one another. I often think we're in something of a new era of the Inquisition. And we all know what an abomination and perversion of Christianity that became the last time, and the consequent carnage.

One of the powerful symbols of the Church is the Table - Christ's table - where all are welcome, and theres a place for everybody. Christ's table is where people of all sorts of opinions and views come together and break bread together, and focus on the best of what we see in one another. Christ's table, and the Christian Faith, have historically been a unifying and strengthening and chastising and inspiring force within a culture. They still are. The fracture and polarization in our culture is a direct result of the foundation being marginalized as it has for the last few decades.

I don't want the Christian witness of my life, a witness I can claim with great humility, to add to the polarization of our society. Many of the situations in the world I am powerless to affect in any substantive way. But the test of these divisions doesn't need to be lived out overseas - the test can be in our own lives: Can I find value in the opinions and passions and commitment of even those with whom I may disagree over this or that? And for even those, be thankful? With my own life, will I be part of the solutions our society need, or further intensify

the problem? As that old saying, which I cite so often, goes, “even a broken clock is still right twice a day”

Your fellow servant of Christ,
Brad

THANKSGIVING SERVICES

Sunday, October 12 8 am & 10:30 am