

Thanksgiving

My dear friends in Christ,

This Thursday, we will all gather with family and friends to share meals and memories in thanksgiving to God for his many blessings in our lives. What in your life would you say you are thankful for. I recently came upon a story, which I believe captures the spirit of the season.

Harry was retiring after fifty years in construction work. His colleagues hired a hall for his retirement party and invited all of his family and friends. At the end of the evening he was invited to make a retirement speech.

“Forty years ago,” he said, “things were so different. Everything was done on the site. We mixed the cement by hand, we dug out the foundations using shovels and sweat. The doors and the window frames were made by the joiner on the site. I used to stand and watch in amazement as a building took shape. Almost every day I would go home with a sense of achievement. Things are so different these days. Now it seems like we are putting a gigantic kit together. The buildings are rushed, and I am often dissatisfied with the final result. I sometimes ask myself, ‘Is this progress?’ I never see a building finished. As soon as my bit is done, I’m moved on to the next site to make way for the decorators.”

The mood of the party became somber as the guests reflected on the changes in work practices, which had made Harry so dissatisfied. “However,” Harry continued, “I can still walk around this town and say to my children – ‘I built that house’ and I am really thankful that I can say that.”

It is always important for us to reflect on the people in our lives and the fruits of our labor and in doing so to be thankful. Many of us never see the results of our labor. Some kinds of work are monotonous and even soul-destroying. Many people today openly admit that the only satisfaction they get from their work is the pay check at the end of the month. However, there are so many blessings our loving God has bestowed upon you that calls for thanksgiving. Life, spouse, parents, children, friends, job, faith and the strength to navigate the dynamics between all these cannot be reduced to just the works of human hands but are precious gifts and blessings from God. And St. Paul reminds us, in 1 Thessalonians 5:18, that “in all circumstances, give thanks.”

Personally, I am very grateful to God for the blessings of life, faith, the priesthood, and the strength he has given me to serve you his people. I am grateful to each one of you here at Holy Trinity and St. John’s for all your support which enables me to serve you and carry out the mission Jesus Christ entrusted to us. Many of you volunteer in different ways, many of you work behind the scenes, and your work help to keep our parish and mission running. I am constantly inspired by your faith and love of Christ. And I am profoundly grateful to you.

Last Wednesday, we had our annual Thanksgiving dinner and it was a spectacular event. It was a joy to see many new faces, which hopefully we will continue to see on Sundays. I thank the Altar Society and everyone who served and helped to make it a memorable day.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving this week, I challenge each of you to spend some time in reflection and name five things in your life you are grateful for, share them with loved ones, and give thanks to God.

May God bless you and all your loved ones. Happy Thanksgiving.

In Gratitude,

--Fr. Anthony Ahamefule