

Thanksgiving November 27, 2025

I spent a fair amount of time last week writing thank-you notes to our most generous donors to the recent Jubilee Gala. We raised about \$40,000 to support hiring our new youth minister. And that's a great reason to give thanks today.

But I'm also very conscious of the generosity of so many other parishioners, whose countless acts of kindness and self-gift make this place so special.

Some of those are very visible--the lectors who proclaim the Word of God to us, the Eucharistic ministers who help distribute the Holy Eucharist, ushers who take up the collection, altar servers, the Sunday noon Choir.

But I want to help us all pay attention to the countless other acts of generosity, so often unseen and even anonymous.

Do you know there are several women who change out those candles in the back in front of the two statues? They do this virtually every day so that someone they don't even know can light a votive candle and offer a prayer.

Each mass we use a corporal and a purificator for the altar. And each week a woman faithfully washes and irons that soiled linen to restock the sacristy.

Each week, or more often, several women from the Flower Committee water and rearranged the flowers in the sanctuary

and change the environment for each liturgical season and celebration.

Those choir members I mentioned? They don't just sing at the noon Mass on Sunday; nine of them come every Tuesday night to rehearse, so that they will be able to “make a joyful sound unto the Lord.”

Catechists generously share themselves with our children in the Faith Formation program throughout the entire year.

Four couples are helping parents with newborns to prepare for their baby's baptisms, and they are committed to continuing to accompany those parents for the next five years.

When we do those baptisms, we put on them a white garment on them, sign of their outward dignity in Christ. Well, there's a crew of women who make those baptismal bibs as well as the prayer shawls that we bless and send to those who are sick or grieving.

The leaders of the Saint Michael's Woman's Association host socials to welcome new parishioners, foster community through for social events like bingo or the upcoming holiday luncheon, or the soup and bread meal on Ash Wednesday.

Christmas Eve, some generous folks will bring down the extra chairs to set up in the narthex so we can accommodate our expected large crowds; and then some more will take the chairs back. Earlier this year, others helped with the Easter Egg hunt in the spring and the Parish Picnic in September.

F.I.A.T. sponsors so many projects such as the Giving Tree and making cards for the residents of Nathaniel Witherell Nursing Home at Christmas and Valentine's day and throughout the year, and they help feed impoverished children through Mary's Meals.

If you or your kids have had juice, coffee and donuts after Sunday mass, it was because lots of different folks stepped forward to help set up and serve. And then clean up!

You see the Eucharistic ministers here at Mass, but do you know how many of them also go to Nathaniel Witherell and bring the Communion, and our prayers, to those who are sick and shut in there?

A team of people are helping hand on the faith through our Catechumenate, the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults; through their ministry, several adults and some older teens will be making first communion in December and getting confirmed in January and three more, a young adult and two youngsters will be baptized at Easter.

And, as grateful as I am for all the contributions of offertory that you put into the basket at each mass, there's also a team of people who actually count that money and prepare it for the bank. Without them, we would not be anywhere.

Every Thursday we are able to have all-day adoration, culminating with benediction, because faithful people come two by two throughout the day to pray, for themselves, for us and for

the Church; and amongst them someone has to set up the candles, throne and monstrance and others take those down at the end of the evening. And those things are heavy!

And of course, the just concluded Thanksgiving food drive, and those who contributed to it, and those who put together the individual bags of food, and those who loaded the trucks on Tuesday evening, and those who unloaded the truck up in Bridgeport.

I mention all this because when we gather at our various family tables, we will have a tendency to name the obvious things for which we are personally grateful, whether that's our health or the love of the family members and friends gathered around the table.

But I'd like to help us pay attention to the other gifts that surround us that so often we tend to take for granted. We tend not to notice.

And when we don't notice, we don't say thank you.

You know, every day the sun comes up, and each time it's no less a gift, no less a miracle, even though it unfailingly happens.

Every moment of every day, we draw breath, and that is no less a miracle even if we are unaware.

And every day we are blessed by gifts from God and gifts that others share with us, even when we don't notice.

As Americans, we have this day as a national holiday, once a year as a reminder to notice.

But every day, as the family of Christ, we give thanks. We call it Eucharist.

And every day we want to notice and to say thank you to God, because at our best we know that everything we have is gift.

Not just our lives, not just our material goods, not just the abundance, not just the stuff that we find pleasant and enjoyable, but everything is gift, including the things that have been hard, including the things that made us grow and stretch, including the things that made us our real selves.

So today, we ask the Lord to help us see, and remember, and give thanks. And I hope we will express that gratitude to the people who'll be around our table, and gratitude for the people who have gone before us, who aren't at the table this day, but are preparing a place for us at the eternal Supper of the Lamb.

And with our prayer of thanks, we will ask for one more thing: new eyes to see ourselves, and to see each other, as who we truly are, gifts from God, our ever-generous God, gifts to share with each other, so that, in good times and in bad, in sunshine and in storm, we can entrust our own pilgrimage, and our fellow pilgrims, to God; and with glad and generous hearts, with confident and courageous spirits, not just on Thanksgiving but on every day, we will remember and give thanks. Amen.