

Thanksgiving...



A Word to Live By!

During this week of Thanksgiving, when our country ponders the incredible blessings God has bestowed upon it, let us examine the greatest blessing that we want to appreciate in the most profound way possible.

I recently participated in a small group study at my parish which focused on coming to a deeper understanding of our Heavenly Father. The study consists of six, ten-minute videos that are compelling and beautiful, with application to life questions. The following are some key points taken directly from the study.

Jesus came to reveal to us that God is a loving Father and that we become His children through Jesus in the Sacrament of Baptism. Christ also revealed that our highest calling is to come to know the Father. When we come to know Jesus and see Him especially through prayerfully studying His life as recorded in the Gospels, we see the Father, because of their intimate communion. This is best expressed by Jesus when Phillip asked Him to reveal the Father at the Last Supper – His response was “Whoever has *seen* Me has *seen* the Father” (John 14:9).

We come to know the Father through *desire*. Thankfully, the desire for God is written on the human heart. The Father created us with this desire, but we have to act on it.

God the Father is the first Person of the Blessed Trinity. “Father” implies relationship and expresses His deepest inner being and identity. He calls us to be His children because He is Father. The relationship between the Persons of the Blessed Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is wholly self-giving love and this relationship is what we are to participate in as children of the Father.

Jesus teaches us about the depth of God’s graciousness and goodness. The Father gives everything to us out of love. He sends us His Son and His Spirit so that we might know Him and be joined to Him, so that we might have God’s own life within us. This we refer to as grace.

As children of the Father, we should respond with thanksgiving. In fact, thankfulness should characterize our whole life. And there is nothing to lose in being thankful, as two benefits of thankfulness are greater joy and peace. As you gather on Thanksgiving Day, or any day for that matter, remember to give thanks to our loving Father who gives us everything that we need.

If you would like to watch this workshop, in ten-minute segments, it is available at **Franciscan at Home** online learning system. Due to generous donors, every parish and school has free access. The following are very simple directions to register for FREE.

- 1) Visit franciscanathome.com/diocese-la-crosse and scroll to the bottom of the page.
- 2) On the right, click the middle blue button: “My parish or school is already registered, and I would like to set up my individual **free** account...”
- 3) Click “Create an Account.” Complete the information and click Save. Select the Diocese of La Crosse from a drop-down menu, and then your Institution = your parish / school, listed by city and name. Finally, click on the “Sign Up” button; you will have a dashboard. Scroll down to “**Institution Tracks**” and select “**Adult Faith Study Track**” on the left, and then enter it to see “**The Father: Origin and Desire of All.**” (Contact Ann Lankford at alankford@diolc.org with ?’s)

To carry a Scripture as you move toward Thanksgiving day, let this one be in the forefront of your heart. Cut the box out, put it on your refrigerator and read it to yourself every time you see it.

“In everything, give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

