



Dear Friends,

Thanksgiving is upon us. This year our celebrations will probably be like no other due to the coronavirus. While this pandemic may throw the proverbial wet blanket over things, it may also provide us with a blessing. If we follow the suggestions of the medical profession, the hustle and bustle usually associated with Thanksgiving won't be taking place. Yes, we may virtually connect, but not only will that not be the same, it will not keep us together for the same amount of time. And therein lies the blessing.

If we follow the medical profession's urging and stay safe, we will have time on our hands. We can fill this time with all sorts of things, but why not use it to actually reflect on what we have to be thankful for right now. We've concentrated so much on what we have had to endure and miss out on during the COVID crisis that we may not have looked at all we've been blessed with and should be thankful for.

I've taken my own advice in order to write this letter and I'd like to share some of what I am thankful for.

I'm writing on the feast day of St. Elizabeth of Hungry, a woman who died young (24) and yet dedicated herself to the poor with great impact. That led me to think of our Food Pantry which is currently feeding those in our area who are in need whether or not a parishioner or Catholic. I'm thankful for a parish that is so dedicated to feed the hungry. Aida Gatch, who runs the Pantry and the Medical Supplies loan service, has been doing an excellent job in our name. I am thankful, also, for the many people who continue to supply food or donate checks for the pantry. What a wonderful witness to Christ!

I am thankful for our St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) society, another great witness of our people to Christ. These folks, working behind the scenes, are helping whoever comes to our doors seeking help for anything from gas to get to work to food for the table to help people pay for medications or the rent. The folks of SVdP work quietly to aid those in need. They need to learn enough of human nature to weed out those looking to snatch a buck from the parish with sob stories from those genuinely in need of help. This is not easy to do. I am very thankful for the men and women of this organization for all they do in our name. (If I may digress for a moment. SVdP depends on us for the money they use. Just like all of us in this pandemic, their financial resources have suffered. The other day a woman came to my door seeking help. When I turned to SVdP, I was informed that they were out of money and couldn't help her. In the same way we have supported the Food Pantry, we need to support SVdP. As a way of giving thanks, please put a dollar or two in an envelope addressed to St. Vincent de Paul and deliver it to 1144 Harrison Ave. or 4008 Prairie Ave. Thanks.)

I am thankful for the owners of Tischler's food store in Brookfield. They have been generous in supporting our feeding the poor. God bless them.

My list just goes on and on. I am thankful.

- for all the members of our parish who continue to financially support the parish with their contributions. I realize it's hard to part with a dollar in this time.
- for the volunteers who greet our people at the church doors, sanitize hands and - especially - for those who sanitize the church buildings after they are used. You are essential to our functioning as a parish and I am very grateful for your service.
- for the members of our new Parish Pastoral Council (Margaret Miller, James Wilder, Emily Szymczak, Marie Espinosa, Jose Solis, Leanne Pavel, Kevin Copp and Carol Benda) who have volunteered to help lead us into the future.
- for all the members of our community of Holy Guardian Angels who embrace our new community in Christ
- for our opportunity to create a welcoming parish in service to La Grange Park/Brookfield

Once started down this road, I have found I can go on and on with what I am thankful for. And I haven't even started on family and friends! Counting our blessings can shift our point of view on life. We have so much to be thankful for in our personal life, our community life and our spiritual life. And most of these come from others: God, family and friends. It's all about love and the relationships we have with others.

Despite what COVID-19 has done to our usual Thanksgiving celebrations, let's not let it undermine how blessed our lives are. Evil tears down and destroys; Love strengths and gives hope. Embrace your family and friends this week any way you can and allow yourself to be built up by them. Bring the Giver of Life to your table - virtual or otherwise - and bask in the warm glow of God's presence coming to you through friends and family. We all need it.

A Blessed Thanksgiving to all

*Fr. Denis*