

THANKSGIVING DAY 2018
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
St. James 1.16 St. Matthew 6.25



**EVERYTHING WE HAVE COMES FROM GOD...THE
CREATOR OF THE HEAVENLY LIGHTS...WHO
DOESN'T CHANGE HIS NATURE...HE DOESN'T TURN
LIGHT INTO DARKNESS.**

The religious meaning attached to Thanksgiving Day has largely been replaced by secular commercialization...a four-day food fest...and a mad rush to be first in line for Black Friday sales.

Thanksgiving Day has its roots in the English Harvest Festival and celebrations and religious services surrounding the day of giving thanks to God for a bountiful harvest.

Twenty-first century farmers...like their ancestors...depend upon the right amount of sun and rain for their crops to grow and thrive and get harvested...so they can ship produce to our favorite market...and we can purchase the food we need for our Thanksgiving dinner.

God gives us good gifts and perfect presents...he's not capable of giving bad gifts and imperfect presents...that is not in his character. Thanksgiving Day is also about acknowledging God is the source of everything we have...including the food on our table. But it's not enough just to say we are thankful...we have to show it through our actions by helping those who are less fortunate.

The Letter from James that serves as our Epistle is perhaps the best sermon about why we should always give thanks to God for the many blessings he has given us...our life, our health, our food, our family, our friends and our Parish. We also have an obligation to share our blessings with others.

What James calls true and genuine religion and what God is looking for in each of us...is the kind of love and compassion toward those in need that comes from the heart...and that compels us to take action...to make life better for them. That is the kind of love and compassion Jesus has for us, and we want to be like him in how we live our lives and in what we do for others.

If we truly believe God the Father has blessed us with the material things in our lives, we first must thank him for those things, and then not hesitate to share what we have with those who have little. True and genuine religion means reaching out to anyone who needs our help.

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us not to worry about where our food and clothing are coming from; God knows what we need even before we ask. What about the person who has just lost his job and truly doesn't know where his next meal will be coming from? What about the family facing a Thanksgiving without the turkey dinner?

Each of us individually and collectively as a Parish has an obligation to use the good gifts and perfect presents God has blessed us with to help others. We can do this through CALL Primrose...as we did with our Thanksgiving boxes. We can support some other organization that best knows how and where to put our contributions to good use.

We too have gifts we will soon offer to God...our good gifts of money help support the Parish and let us give more perfectly to others...our good gifts of bread and wine are returned to us in those most perfect of presents...the Holy Eucharist...the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Sacrament of the Altar. The word *Eucharist*...in fact...means *giving thanks*.

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Happy Thanksgiving!

