

THANKSGIVING DAY 2014
SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
FATHER CRAIG LOONEY
ST. JAMES 1.16 ST. MATTHEW 6.25



Good gifts and perfect presents...come to us from God...the Creator of the heavenly lights...and God our Father does not take back what he has given us...because he loves us.

We learn three basic truths about Christianity from the lessons appointed for Thanksgiving Day:

- Everything we have comes from God...we need to thank him for his gifts of love...as the hymn we just sang tells us.
- We must share what we have with those who have little or nothing.
- We should not spend so much time worrying about things. God knows what we need.

Everything we have...our life, our health, our food...comes from God. We should be thanking him for his good gifts and perfect presents all the time...not just on Thanksgiving Day.

If we take our Faith seriously...and James is adamant about this...we must put it into action. We must not just talk the talk...we must walk the walk. We must show love and compassion toward others...the visceral kind of love and compassion James calls true and genuine religion.

Our response to CALL's Fill-a-Box/Feed-a-Family Thanksgiving food drive means ten families will have a Thanksgiving meal. We must not stop there...we must look for other opportunities to reach out to those in need of food, clothes or other items.

James also gives us some practical advice on how God's much-loved children should behave:

- Think before we say something...it might come back at us.
- Don't get upset and angry so easily...nothing good will come of it.
- Look in the mirror...what do we see...just our reflection...take a look at what is in our heart.

Giving thanks to God for his many blessings means sharing those blessings with others.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us not to worry so much about food or clothing. Human beings have mastered the art of worrying about material possessions. We love to worry...and we want other people to worry along with us. We have jobs and money that help us buy the things we need to live...and those are also good gifts and perfect presents sent from God. And we worry about those things too.

Jesus tells us to call God...*Abba...Papa*...the respectful and most intimate way children call their father. We get to call God our Father...Papa! Jesus is not telling us to stop asking God for the things we need to live...God expects this of us. What Jesus is saying is he wants us to trust God our Father...God our Papa...to take care of our material needs in the way that will benefit us the most.

The Thanksgiving Day hymns talk about planting seeds...asking God to send the right amount of sun and rain...so the seeds will grow into healthy plants that get harvested at the right time.

Thanksgiving Day is the good and perfect transition from the long Trinity Season...the season of spiritual growth...to the Advent Season...and our preparation for the First Coming of Jesus on Christmas Day...and our hope and expectation for his Second Coming...when he will come to harvest us...God's much loved children...and take us to heaven.

We ask God our Father to bless us with good gifts and perfect presents...and he does. Let's take this time to thank him for all his love.

