

Thanksgiving Day 2025 (Morning Prayer)

Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish

Father Craig Looney

Deuteronomy 8.1-11, 17-20 St. James 1.16-27

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Good gifts and perfects presents....come to us from God...the Creator of the heavenly lights. He is not like shifting shadows that change with the seasons or the time of day. God's character, plans, love and promises are constant and reliable.

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.*
- *God has taken care of our material needs from the beginning, even when we wander off and forget to thank him for what we have.*
- *We must share our food and other material things with those who have little or nothing.*

The Old Testament Lesson this morning is from Deuteronomy. The word "Deuteronomy" means "Second Law". It is a restatement of the commandments and laws given to a new generation of Israelites after Moses and before they entered the Promised Land. The people are reminded they have a covenant relationship with God, who provided them with the food, water and clothing they needed to survive during the forty years they wandered in the desert.

Deuteronomy challenges the people to renew that covenant relationship with God by remembering what he has done for them. He showed his love for them when they were brought out of Egypt and they were about to enter the land He promised would be theirs. It would be a land of rivers and springs and underground streams gushing with water. It would be a fertile land of all kinds of grain and fruit. They would never be hungry or thirsty again. The people were also reminded they had a duty to share their many blessings with others...because they were once strangers in a strange land who needed help.

Thanksgiving Day is one day set aside for us to thank God for our life, our health and our food. We should be thanking him for his many good gifts and perfect presents that come our way every day...not just on Thanksgiving Day. We are called to trust God to take care of our

material needs just as he took care of the Israelites centuries ago. Saint James makes it clear our trust in God comes with a commitment to take care of the needs of others. Giving thanks to God for his many blessings means sharing those blessings with others. Consider making a financial contribution to help CALL Primrose provide food for individuals and families who would otherwise go hungry.

James is adamant our Faith must be put into action. It is not enough to hear God's word...we must go out and make God's word come alive in the works we do. 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. A faith that doesn't reach out to people is like the man looking in a mirror. He sees an empty (dead) reflection of himself. Satisfied with what he sees, he goes about his business. Our faith must be more than the reflection we see in a mirror. It must be active and dynamic and produce results.

Thanksgiving Day occurs during the end of the long Trinity Season when our focus has been on spiritual growth. That makes Thanksgiving Day the good and perfect transition to the Advent Season. On Advent Sunday, we focus our attention on repentance and renewal...as we prepare for the First Coming of Jesus on Christmas Day...and look forward to his Second Coming at the end of time...when we will be the harvest.

Today we ask God our Father to continue to bless us with good gifts and perfect presents...and to make it possible for us to help those who are in need. We ask him to change the hearts of those who do evil into hearts motivated to do good. We must always thank God for his unchanging love for us, and we must pray for peace in a world of shifting shadows.

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