

# Insights in Liturgy

By Thomas J. Driscoll

## Thanksgiving Celebrates Our Salvation

Thanksgiving will be here soon. The "thanks-giving" days of prayer and reflection over their very survival that the early Plymouth colonists celebrated gradually grew to a regular yearly feast and a national holiday. The supermarket and department store sales stand as reminders of how far we have moved from the religious origins of Thanksgiving.

What do we celebrate in our Thanksgiving liturgy? The American cultural sense of Thanksgiving revolves around the television schedule of the Macy parade, the Chicago Bears and Detroit Lions football game, and the anticipation of Christmas shopping bargains on Nov. 23. Sandwiched within these splendors is a bacchanalia of food and drink. The "prayer" of the cultural Thanksgiving is that of the Pharisee in Luke 18:11 — "God, I thank thee that I am not like other men..." The powerfully predominating secular view ignores the poor and oppressed; it offers no praise and thanks to the Lord.

Our Thanksgiving Day liturgies should not celebrate our prosperous bounty and gorging, but our salvation. The Christian acknowledges and cultivates deep gratitude to the Lord for the many things He has given for our use. True, thanksgiving always looks to a deeper level. We offer thanks for life itself as given by the Father and redeemed in Jesus Christ. We give thanks for God's love made present in Jesus (cf. John 3:16). This gratitude leads us to the essential Christian act of praise.

The Christian understanding of thanksgiving brings with it a call: we are asked to enter deeply into the center of the Christian life, the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection. This act of total self-giving is our call to moral responsibility. The paschal mystery calls us to a simple life style, an active ministry to the poor and oppressed and a priority for prayer in our lives. Praise and thanksgiving for the presence of the redeeming Lord in our daily dying and rising are what the Christian Thanksgiving celebrates.

It has become customary on Thanksgiving Day to celebrate the Eucharist. It might also be remembered that the Liturgy of the Hours, specifically Morning Prayer and Evensong, is also the official prayer of the Church. The addition or substitution of these liturgies might be a meaningful alteration in the parish schedule.

If the Eucharist is chosen, it must be remembered that this is a weekday Mass and therefore should not outshine the following Sunday's liturgy. The accent in the thanksgiving eucharistic liturgy should be on the Eucharistic Prayer. Ideally, the preface (if not the entire Eucharistic Prayer) should be sung. The true "offertory" is within the

Eucharistic Prayer. Therefore, exaggerated presentations of gifts put an undue emphasis on this gathering together of the elements of bread and wine. Singing during the offertory procession, in addition to being unnecessary, may serve to highlight and prolong this simple rite so that it diminishes the more important Eucharistic Prayer. The Eucharistic Prayer should be chosen and proclaimed with great care. As Justin writes in Apology I, "... bread, wine and water are brought. The president then prays and gives thanks as well as he can..."

Parishes that have not yet implemented the fullness of symbol found in communion under both forms at all Masses may find the Thanksgiving Day Eucharist an opportunity to invite this participation.

Our celebration of Thanksgiving, above all else, must awaken and cultivate in us the "spiritual attitude which relives His praise and thanksgiving." (Lucien Deiss: It's the Lord's Supper, p. 48).

May we join the psalmist,  
Blessed be Yahweh, who performs  
miracles of love for me! (PS. 31:21)

### NFP Information

Natural Family Planning of Rochester has scheduled an information session for 7:30 p.m., Friday, Oct. 19, at St. James Church in Trumansburg.

The meeting is open to the public at no charge.

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## Reception

Father John J. Glogowski, new chaplain at St. Ann's Home — The Heritage, chats with residents, Madeleine Silli and Flossie Bunn, at a reception given for him by the residents and staff at St. Ann's.

## CYO Receives Grant

The Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) was the recipient of a grant for \$119,751 from the CETA Administration of Rochester recently. The funds will be used to provide "after-school employment of 40 economically disadvantaged youth who live in the city," according to a CYO release.

The CYO's Inner City

Outreach program will give after school employment which "provides realistic and substantial job duties and close supervision." Inner City Outreach is headed by Thomas J. Harris.

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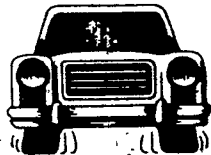
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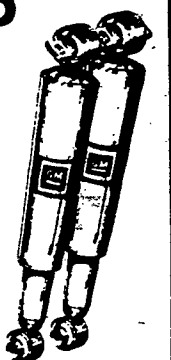
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