



St. THOMAS the APOSTLE

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A Catholic Times Flashback: Bishop Paprocki 's Message on Thanksgiving (11/15/15)

"As our national observance of Thanksgiving approaches, it is good for us to reflect on the importance of giving thanks to God in our prayers... Prayers of thanksgiving characterize the prayer of the church which, in celebrating the Eucharist, reveals and becomes more fully what she is... The letters of St. Paul often begin and end with thanksgiving, and the Lord Jesus is always present in it: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:18); "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2)... The best way to begin Thanksgiving Day, then, is by going to church to thank God for all the gifts of creation that he has showered upon us, especially the gift of his Real Presence in the Eucharist. "

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Weekends

Sunday 10 am

Weekdays

Monday-Friday 8:15 am

Reconciliation

Sundays: 9:15 - 9:50 am
Wednesdays: 7:30 - 8:10 am

Eucharistic Adoration

First Friday from 9 am - 5 pm

Decatur Catholic Radio

WDCR 88.9/96.5

CONTEMPLATE

When I was a kid, I hated playing Monopoly because my siblings and friends always seemed to win. Scared to risk my fake money on buying properties, I'd hold on to it. My opponents hungrily bought up the various real estate squares on the board. Then, inevitably, my poor, low-equity self would land on their spots, pay them rent, and my money would drain to zero. It seemed so unfair. I had to learn that monopoly money is meant to be spent. I was scared to lose some of it. So, I lost all of it.

Jesus' parable about the talents is not really about economics but about the investability of everything he entrusts to us. How marvelous that everyone in the fable who places talents in the open market doubles their investment. Jesus' success strategy for us seems to be, whatever we have, get it out of our possession. Risk it as quickly and as fully as we can.

We have valuable things to invest — time, talents, treasure. The Lord invites us to be brave and even somewhat reckless, to give as much away as possible. If we give it away in the direction of love and truth, it will grow. If we hold on to it in fear, the little we have will be taken away. Let me challenge you this week: find something in your life you're holding on to, and risk it by giving it away. It won't double if you hold on to it.

— Father John Muir



A WORD FROM FR. PETER

Do You Celebrate Thanksgiving In Nigeria?

As Thanksgiving draws near, many people ask me if we celebrate Thanksgiving in Nigeria and how. It is a natural curiosity for people to ask questions like this to those they know come from cultures and places other than the United States. Sometimes, I am inclined to say no, we do not celebrate Thanksgiving in Nigeria. However, that answer will either be incomplete or wrong. While Thanksgiving is an American thing, for the most part, many other cultures and nations have celebrations at various times of the year that are very similar to the American fiesta of Thanksgiving.



Fr. Peter Chineke,
Parochial
Administrator

In the Igbo nation of Nigeria, the former Republic of Biafra, the "New Yam Festival," known as the *Iri Ji* or *Iwa Ji* in the Igbo language, is very similar to the American Thanksgiving. The *Iri Ji* is a thanksgiving festival to God for a good harvest at the beginning of the harvesting period. It takes about three days in different towns and kingdoms across the Igbo nation, anytime between July and September. Since July through September is a long vacation (summer vacation) in Nigeria, schools are not in session. But because the *Iri Ji* is a town and kingdom-based celebration, it is not a work-free day for workers except, in some cases, for farmers.

The American Thanksgiving and the Igbo *Iri Ji* have similar cultural origins and essence. American Thanksgiving is farmers-based in origin. It lasted for three days in the early stages of the holiday. In the same way, the Igbo *Iri Ji* was farmers-based and somehow still is. And it typically lasts for three days. Both fiestas focused primarily on thanking God for his blessings upon humanity. In his words, President Abraham Lincoln explained in the document that made the American Thanksgiving a national holiday that Thanksgiving is a time to render "Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens."

So, yes. We celebrate Thanksgiving in Nigeria – in the Igbo nation of Nigeria where I grew up. It is not as popular as American Thanksgiving because it is not a national holiday like American Thanksgiving. Also, the *Iri Ji* is not celebrated simultaneously across Igboland as the American Thanksgiving, which is celebrated on the same day across the United States. Therefore, various cultures and nations around the world may have other names for their Thanksgiving.

However, they indeed have celebrations like the American Thanksgiving, where the people thank God for all the blessings of life.

It will be good to remind ourselves that this Thanksgiving, we should thank God for the many blessings he has given us in this life. The life we live, our friends and family, our Catholic faith, education, jobs, and businesses, and the many things we have and enjoy in our world today. All these are reasons to be grateful to our family and friends, especially God. To express our gratitude, let us choose to stay away from our sinful and bad habits, forgive people who have wronged us, and ask for forgiveness from people we wronged. Let us pursue peace and justice in our thoughts and actions. And finally, let us reach out to people and extend goodwill, kindness, love, and compassion. May you and yours have a memorable Thanksgiving this week. Amen.

—Fr. Peter

Thanksgiving Day Prayer



Good and gracious God, we give You thanks today, as we do all days, first and foremost for the gift of creation and the gift of life. We ask You to bless this food, that it may nourish us and sustain us, and strengthen our ability to do

Your will. We pray in thanksgiving for all the hands involved in bringing it to our table. You tell us, Lord, that to whom much is given, much is expected. May this meal and the fellowship we enjoy not only serve as clear reminders of Your love of us, but of Your call for us to share Your love and to serve our brothers and sisters, especially those most in need. We ask this as we ask all things, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(from hallow.com)



St. Jude's Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved, and preserved throughout the world now and forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us.
St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us.
St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us. I will never forget thy graces and favors you obtain for me and I will do my utmost to spread devotion to you.

Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

Say this prayer 9 times a day for 9 days.

Thank you, St. Jude, for Prayers Answered.



ATTENTION ALTAR SERVERS

Please join Fr. Peter on
Wed. Nov. 22 at 6pm
In the Church
For a Meeting & Training

Mass Intentions for the Week

Sunday, November 19
10 am – **Leona & Austin Nichols †**
Monday, November 20
8:15 am – **Leona Nichols †**
Tuesday, November 21
8:15 am – **Miggy Salazar**
Wednesday, November 22
8:15 am – **Connie Smith**
Thursday, November 23
8:15 am – **Polly Hensley †**
Friday, November 24
8:15 am – **For the People of St. Thomas**
Saturday, November 25, *No Mass*
† *Deceased*

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Food for the Hungry

Just a reminder that we have a Food Drive for Catholic Charities every weekend of the year. A few cans and boxes of food make a big difference to people who may otherwise go hungry (put items in the basket by the coat rack).

Thanks for your caring and generosity!

Christmas Card Donations



This year St. Thomas is continuing the tradition of taking Christmas gift bags to its parish members who are homebound or in senior facilities. If you have any unused or new Christmas cards, with envelopes, that you would like to donate, use the box at the back of church during the weeks of Nov. 26th & Dec. 3rd.

Keeping in Touch



A visit, phone call or even a handwritten card can brighten anyone's day. St. Thomas parish misses those who can no longer join in celebrating the Sunday Eucharist each week. If you are homebound or in a senior facility, please contact the parish office and give your name, address and phone number so your info can be added to the parish's visitation/contact list.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please Remember in your Prayers All who are Ill at Home or in the Hospital and their Families and Caregivers

Stan Rothenbuecher, Carol Dilbeck, Rachel Flick, Kevin Henry, Jim Hertel, Ann-Marie Hillyer, Edwin Jones, Patricia Jones, Kelly McLean, Trey McLean, Christina Mooney, Lucia Mounce, Tom Mounce, Rev. Msgr. James O'Shea, Art Richard, Kay Russell, Roz Sandage, Libby Spainhour, Rev. Jason Stone, Ed Schanuel, Ron Shinall, Brenda Sullivan, JoAn Wayne, Pete Wayne, Jan Vandercar, and Tami Wittenauer. Please call the parish office or email stthomasdecaturn@dio.org to add or remove a name.



"O Blessed Virgin Mary, who can worthily give you the just dues of praise and thanksgiving, you who by the wondrous assent of your will rescued a fallen world? What songs of praise can our weak human nature recite in your honor, since it is by your intervention alone that it has found the way to restoration? Accept, then, such poor thanks as we have to offer here, though they be unequal to your merit; and, receiving our vows, obtain by your prayers the remission of our offenses. Carry our prayers within the sanctuary of the heavenly audience and bring forth the gift of our reconciliation." — St. Augustine of Hippo (from catholicnewsagency.com)

The 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit



*Wisdom Understanding Counsel
Fortitude Knowledge Piety Fear of God*

Encyclical Thank You



"We have reached the twenty-fifth year of Our papacy, an unusual event which has never before occurred in the succession of Roman pontiffs since the days of St. Peter. You have been so joyful for Us, and you have shown so clearly the vigorous life which everywhere inspires the Christian family, that We have been deeply touched. By joining Our prayers to Yours, We have gained new strength to await with greater confidence the full and complete triumph of the Church."

—Pope Pius IX, *Saepe Venerabiles Fratres*, 1871

Song of Thanks

"We Thank Thee," Jim Reeves, 1962

We thank Thee each morning for a newborn day
Where we may work the fields of new mown hay
We thank Thee for the sunshine
And the air that we breathe
Oh Lord we thank Thee

We thank Thee for the rivers that run all day
We thank Thee for the little birds that sing away
We thank Thee for the trees
And the deep blue sea
Oh Lord we thank Thee

Oh yes we thank Thee Lord
For every flower that blooms
Birds that sing, fish that swim
And the light of the moon

We thank Thee every day
As we kneel and pray
That we were born with eyes
To see these things

We thank Thee for the fields
Where the clovers grow
We thank Thee for the pastures
Where the cattle may roam
We thank Thee for Thy love so pure and free
Oh Lord we thank Thee

Oh yes we thank Thee Lord...
We thank Thee every day...
We thank Thee for the fields...



Thanksgiving Proclamations

"Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, peas, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as He has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience.

Now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and ye little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the daytime, on Thursday, November 29th, of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty three and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings."

— William Bradford, Proclamation, 1623

* * * * *

"... Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship... Population has steadily increased... and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American people. I do, therefore, invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens."

— Abraham Lincoln, Excerpt from his Proclamation, October 20, 1863

Happy Thanksgiving





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