

## **From the Pastor's Desk**

*I am writing this reflection on Thanksgiving evening since the bulletin had to be completed early due to the Thanksgiving holiday. I spent Thanksgiving day with my mother. Just the two of us being alone was different, but very beautiful nonetheless. We enjoyed a traditional full Thanksgiving meal and then watched TV, after which I took my mom home, which was followed by what I would indulgently say was a well-deserved nap. I spent the rest of the evening prayerfully reflecting upon those things for which I am very thankful, both universally and in particular. First and foremost, I am thankful for the gift of faith in God. I am grateful that I am able to have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ in prayer and I am thankful for the power of the Holy Spirit who graces me with patient endurance in light of the many health difficulties that I have had to endure. Second, I am grateful for the gift of my mother. It has been a pleasure having dinner with her on a very regular basis over the past two and a half years since my father died. Caring for her has been an absolute joy. We have an intimate bond that defies simple explanation. All I know that is I am graced to have her and I hope that we are able to enjoy one another for a very long time. Third, I am grateful for our parish family. You sustain me and give me life and hope. Your support, especially prayerfully, over the past ten and a half years has been unparalleled. I would not have been able to have made it through the difficult times with it. Fourth, I am grateful for two VERY close friends who I know who would prefer not to be named who have been a rock for me over the course of my medical issues. One is a dear family friend for more than 25 years and the other a more recent friend, but each one, both in their own way, have provided me help and support that cannot begin to be described in words. I hope and pray that they know how very special they are to me. There are so many other things for which I could say that I am grateful to God for: the many medical professionals who have attended to my needs over the past 8 years, the diocese for its generous concern for me and its acknowledgement of my gifts and talents, the many undergraduates, graduate students, and seminarians that I have taught over the past 30 years, the many, many friends that have come into my life, both living and deceased, and the list could go on and on. The wonderful thing about being thankful is that it allows us to store up in our grateful memory all the good experiences of the past and present. In this way, the richness of the past and present, of tradition, and the whole variety of positive experiences become a treasure, a source of energy for the here and now. Gratitude to God is a permanently open channel through which all good things from the past and everything that the present offers become living and fruitful. And so, not just on Thanksgiving, but always, we should be grateful to*

*God for what we have, for who we are and who we are becoming through His grace.*

### **Ongoing Food Drive**

*Unfortunately, our collection of food did not meet the deadline for the distribution of items for those who struggle during the Thanksgiving holiday. I have been told however, that given the current economic conditions, that the resources of St. Vincent de Paul have been severely depleted. Therefore, I am extending our collection of non-perishable food items until the weekend of December 13/14. If you are able to bring something, even one item, it would be greatly appreciated. I am always taken aback by the generosity of our parish when it comes to the collection of food items. I am certain that I will continue not to be disappointed.*

### **Advent Penance Service – Save the Date**

*Our Annual Advent Penance Service is scheduled for Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM. Please take this opportunity to receive God's gift of mercy by celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation with us. A reminder that one needs to be in the state of grace to receive the Jubilee year Plenary Indulgence. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet that requirement and enjoy the benefits from this gift of grace imparted by the Holy See. Regardless, even if we think that we don't need to celebrate the sacrament of Penance (which is probably an indicator that we do), think about the tremendous graces that are gained through this wonderful gift that God has given to His Church. Incidentally, I love the sacrament and I avail myself to it on a regular basis.*

### **First Friday**

*This Friday is first Friday, when the Church generally remembers and celebrates the Sacred Heart of Jesus in his encyclical, **Delexit Nos**, Pope Francis reminds us that "The heart of Christ is 'ecstasy,' openness, gift, and encounter. In that heart, we learn to relate to one another in wholesome and happy ways, and to build up in this world God's kingdom of love and justice. Our hearts, united with the heart of Christ, are capable of working this social miracle" (No. 28). What a wonderful day to come to Mass and remain for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Actually, we have Mass and Adoration every Friday. What a wonderful spiritual addition for the season of Advent. The number of those people who come to Mass followed by adoration is slowly but steadily growing and many have said it has changed their lives. Prayerfully consider adopting this practice as you prepare for the coming of the Lord during this Advent Season.*