

Thanksgiving 2017

We began our month with a proclamation of this powerful and beautiful reading and we come near to the end of this month with this powerful and beautiful reading. At the beginning giving thanks for the goodness of the saints and today giving thanks for the goodness of the earth and of our lives on it.

We commonly call these words the Beatitudes, the blessed, which Scripture scholar, Fr. Michael Guinan, calls “signposts for life”. They mark the way for us, especially when we’re not sure which way to go or how to act or react – questions that have arisen a lot this year in politics and natural disasters and human disasters. *“Blessed are they who mourn”* is surely the guidepost for lots of folks in our land today.

But all of these beatitudes speak so distinctly on a day of Thanksgiving because it is not only an idea or a turkey dinner – it is an action. As Christians when we give thanks we do something – not only in prayer but at and through the Lord’s Table. I often say, not my original idea, that the Eucharist is an action, a verb, not a noun. Not just something we receive but something we do. The very meaning of the word Eucharist in the Greek is thanksgiving. When we eat and drink the body and blood of Christ, we become the body and blood of Christ on earth, which means we must act as Christ would act.

It so happens this Thanksgiving falls on the day we, as Church, also remember 3 exemplars of our faith: St Clement I, martyr in the first century and third pope from St. Peter, St. Columban, an Irish monk of the seventh century and Blessed Miguel Agustin Pro, a Jesuit priest and martyr of the 20th century! Some of their words:

Pope and martyr St. Clement I wrote: “Charity unites us to God. Charity knows no schism, does not rebel, does all things in concord.” *“Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.”*

The great abbot, St. Columban, who left Ireland to found monasteries in France and preach in Switzerland and Italy wrote: “Nothing is sweeter than calm of conscience, nothing safer than purity of soul.” *“Blessed are the clean of heart for they will see God.”*

**And Blessed Miguel Agustin Pro, who became an undercover priest in Mexico at a time in the 1920's when public worship was forbidden. He was discovered and executed. He wrote: "May we learn to speak, to shout out against injustices, with confidence and without fear. We proclaim the principles of the Church, the reign of love, without forgetting that it is also a reign of justice."
*"Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."***

In our world we have so much for which to give thanks – and we have so much to do in thanks-giving. As we mark this day may we strive to lift up the lowly, to care for the earth, to live out every beatitude with all our heart and mind and soul and strength as best each of us can. For when we act together in such a way as Church, as People of God, we continue the reign Christ has begun for us!

Happy Thanks-giving!