



*Please take a moment to read a Thanksgiving message from Archbishop John C. Wester.*

If there is a silver lining to the coronavirus pandemic we have been living through for almost two years, I believe it is that we have a deeper appreciation for the importance of being present to one another. Sickness separates us from each other, forcing us to isolate from loved ones, from our regular routine, from “bumping into each other” as we lie alone in our sick beds. The COVID-19 pandemic took these realities to the extreme as loved ones were forced to die without the support and immediate presence of loved ones and as those infected with the virus were placed in mandatory quarantine. Live-streamed Masses, online meetings and social media helped us to endure our “exile” but the painful reality of fragmented relationships definitely took its toll.

Little wonder then that even though we are still in the throes of the pandemic, we are beginning to appreciate more deeply renewed contacts and a sense of normal relationships. More than ever, we are grateful for being able to visit with one another, meet in person and worship in public, even if we still have to wear masks and socially distance as best we can. Everyone seems to have a heightened sense of the importance of being present to one another. I suspect that we are less likely to take for granted the gift of being with one another, of relating in person with one another, as we communicate in ways that are only possible face to face and not over the internet.

It is against this backdrop that we sit down to Thanksgiving dinners with one another, grateful for the opportunity to be present to our loved ones in ways that we used to take for granted and now are experiencing as precious gifts. It is my hope and prayer that as we gather for Thanksgiving meals this year we will give renewed thanks to God for the gift of our loved ones and that we will savor the precious moments we have with them.

I also pray that all of us in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe will deepen in our appreciation for the presence of Christ who promised to be with us “to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20). In good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, during the pandemic and beyond the pandemic, Jesus Christ dwells in our midst, closer to us than we are to ourselves. In the spirit of a popular hymn, we are encouraged to see Thanksgiving as a time for us to listen more attentively and to see more clearly, thus enabling us to follow more nearly our Risen Savior who is the source of every good gift. The thanksgiving prayers we raise on November 25th are an acknowledgment of all that Jesus Christ gives to us with infinite love and boundless mercy. This is the time for us to remember that all we are and all we have comes through, with and in the Lord Jesus. Indeed, our only response to such unfathomable goodness is “thank you!”

It is in this spirit that I thank all of you, my brothers and sisters in Christ, for the gift you are to me. Together, we form this local Church, this community of believers, who raise our voices in thanksgiving to Jesus Christ, “the same yesterday, today and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8)

May God bless you this Thanksgiving and always.