



A word from Fr. Bill.....

Happy Thanksgiving!

Dear Parishioners:

Happy Thanksgiving! Please be assured as I celebrate Thanksgiving on Thursday at the 10:00 AM Mass that you, our parishioners, will be foremost in my prayers of thanksgiving to our God. I will thank God for your witness of faith, especially by your regular participation at our liturgies and your generosity in so many ways of time, talents and treasures. Please don't ever underestimate either the value of that witness or the encouragement it gives.

I will give thanks for my predecessors on whose great accomplishments we are all able to build. I give thanks to those who encouraged the Filipino community to find a home here at St. Augustine's. I give thanks to those who encouraged the young adults to feel welcome here and who facilitated the process for so many young couples to feel welcome to celebrate their marriages here. I am grateful for all of the administrative work of my predecessors who saw to it that necessary repairs to the buildings were accomplished and who oversaw a capital campaign that among many other things allowed for the upgrading of Carr Hall, air conditioning of the church and the parapet repairs, etc.

I will give thanks at Thursday's Mass for the staff members who were invaluable in helping me in my transition to the parish: Tim, April, and Joe. I am very grateful for the "new" members of the staff: Jacob who is a great deal more than a parish secretary but truly is the Director of Parish Services and who is involved with the many things which that title implies; Jean who coordinates the extensive details for approximately 50 weddings a year and who is the representative of the parish to those couples, their families, the visiting priests and deacons, etc.; Bob who recently started as our Facilities Director and who has the background as a lawyer and owner of his own home repair business-- as someone who is not mechanically inclined, I am very dependent on him; Ken who by his love to clean makes our buildings welcoming to all who use them; Kim who for ten years has made our parish known for its excellent music at each of the liturgies; Nancy who was our cook in the friary for about a year but had to leave for health reasons and Joale, our newest employee-- who we feel very fortunate to have with us as she begins the tasks of planning the meals, buying the food and cooking dinner four nights a week for the Friars--which enables us to have a better quality of community life. I feel extremely fortunate and I am very grateful that each of these persons brings his/her unique interests and capabilities for the betterment of our parish.

My closest collaborators and advisors in the parish are the members of our Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Commission. They generously donate many hours inside and outside of meetings that help the well-being of the parish.

The Parish Pastoral Council has spent hours helping to develop and implement a Pastoral Plan (based on Pope Francis' exhortation entitled, *The Joy of the Gospel*) which has included more involvement of members of the community (new members of the Councils, new Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Music Ministers, etc.); outreach in service to the larger community (approximately 20 parishioners preparing and serving dinner twice a month at the Gift of Life Family Home); overall evangelization as is evidenced by our attempts to reach out to the condos and hotels in our geographic area; networking with parishioners;

development of our excellent website. They have advised me in many other areas as well and they help me hear what they hear in the parish. The Parish Pastoral Council is beginning to advise me on how we as a parish might celebrate our 220th anniversary as a parish.

The Parish Finance Commission has been invaluable in helping me deal with issues of the billboard, salaries, air conditioning Carr Hall, preparing and overseeing the parish budget, dealing with accounting procedures and personnel, issues with things like the oven in Carr Hall, the oil tanks, repairing the steeple, looking at fundraising opportunities, etc. For someone who can't change a flat tire, I truly treasure their expertise and advice.

The liturgical celebrations are the central aspect of our parish. Nothing which is mentioned above would be necessary or would happen if we didn't celebrate the Eucharist well. It is the sign of our unity and the sources and summit of our parish life. Consequently it is extremely essential that our liturgies are celebrated well. I believe there are three important aspects for this to happen: being welcoming (social each Sunday after each of the 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM Masses), good homilies and good music. (Two out of three isn't bad). For this reason, I will offer special thanks on Thursday for all who make the socials happen and for our Music Ministers, Lectors and Eucharistic Ministers who enhance our liturgies.

I will give special thanks on Thursday for those involved in the process of our Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It is a great deal of encouragement and hope to me to see five men so interested in their faith and making such a commitment to learn more about Catholicism.

I will offer special thanks for my Augustinian community, Father Paul and Father Tony, who support me in my prayer life and help me to be faithful to my vocation as an Augustinian. I am also grateful to them as they enable me at times to go away for a day off, vacation, retreat and for important happenings of family and friends. Not every pastor in a one-priest-parish has that support. It is certainly high on the list for which I am grateful.

There are many others who contribute to our parish life for whom I am grateful, e.g., those who minister at our daily liturgies (Joseph), those who are preparing children for sacraments (Jackie). The danger in writing such a letter as this is missing someone('s) name that should be mentioned for whom I am grateful. Please be assured, if I did miss someone, it is not intentional and that everyone who contributes in any way to our parish community will be included in my prayers of Thanksgiving on Thursday.

Hopefully, you may be able to join me on Thursday morning at 10:00 A.M., when we can all give thanks to God together.

Please find elsewhere within this bulletin, prayers which I would encourage you to incorporate into your Thanksgiving dinner.

Have a great week and especially have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Father Bill