

Once again, it is an honor to speak to you on Thanksgiving Day. Giving thanks, is after all, more than a formality or courtesy. It displays an attitude. This Thanksgiving, I have much for which to be thankful. I give thanks for the usual things: friends, family, a meaningful job, a faith community that gives me encouragement and support, good health, a caring and supportive spouse, the list could go on.

This Thanksgiving I am also aware of the privilege of being born in America. I am thankful that my ancestors travelled here, risking some degree of danger and a high degree of uncertainty, so that I could be born in the USA.

In spite of the recent election I am still happy to live ~~in~~ here; and yes, I continue to be thankful. Why thankful? Why *not* be thankful? The opposite would be to adopt an attitude of bitterness or envy. Some things in life are simple Either/ Or's. I am persuaded that we can live either with thanks in our heart, or we can be always wanting more. There's an old Mexican proverb that a Hispanic friend would sometimes recite to me in order to explain his people: "You're not poor unless you want more." I've sometimes thought in response: "How un-American!" We Americans always want more... perhaps because Progress is an American ideal. Progress does have benefits: for example, who among us would want to go back to the computer we used 20 years ago? An attitude of constant improvement is as American as apple pie. There *is* however, a dark side to all our competition and progress. We are rarely content with what we have. Those who are never satisfied can sometimes forget to slow down and say, "Thank you," to the Creator. Thank you for this gift of life: with all its joys and sorrows, triumph and tragedy, wins and losses. When we slow down, take a breath and say thank you, we humbly acknowledge that we are not deserving of the many blessings that come our way. When we say thanks to God, we begin to say thank you to the people around us—even the one or two who irritate us. When we say thanks to God, the natural sequence should be to look around carefully at those who have less, and, recognize there but for the grace of God go I. Hence, an attitude of thanks makes us more prone to render assistance to those in need.

Finally, an attitude of thanks should make us more open-hearted. I was reminded of that last Wednesday at the annual Thanksgiving Sing held at St. Bernard's Church. The last time we held the annual sing at St. Bernard's Father Eric Freed hosted us all with a joy and magnanimity that was infectious. Father Eric was murdered a few weeks later, and so we dedicated this Thanksgiving Sing to his memory. Pondering the death of a colleague, and the songs of praise from so many diverse faith communities, gave me cause, to pause, and give thanks for this fleeting gift of life, especially for all those who have shaped my life for the better, including some who have passed on from this life to the next.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment