

We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

October 2026

Dear Parish family members of St. James, Leitrim,

Once again, another Thanksgiving celebration dawns on us. The observation of Thanksgiving started with our farmers who toiled throughout the year to till their fields, grow their seeds, watch the Good Lord pour rain and sunshine over them, watch the seeds grow and finally harvest the produce from these seeds. What a joy it was, and still is, to see how God in His mercy has granted these farmers abundance of produce!! This period, therefore, became known as Harvest Thanksgiving as the farmers gave thanks for their abundant harvest.

Today, having moved from an agrarian life to urban, the tradition continues as we all give thanks for all the blessings in our lives, our careers, health, family and other fortunes in the past year. For us Christians, Thanksgiving is historically a day to praise and thank God for our blessings. We could not have done it without Him. He granted us all these blessings and mercies, and for that, we give thanks.

Bishop William Walsham How, an Anglican clergyman, overwhelmed by all the blessings in his life in 1858, wrote this doxology – a short hymn of praise - from which we get the theme for our Thanksgiving. "*We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.*" This is a hymn about giving thanks to Almighty God for all He has given us, and in appreciation, we bring back to Him these gifts to be used for the church's ministry of word and deed to God's people–in other words, 'in *our'* ministry for Christ. This text declares that everything in creation already belongs to God, and that, what we give and what we keep are all to be used gratefully in God's service. As God gives us, so we give back to Him.

As we plan how we are going to mark this great event with our family and friends, let us remember the number one reason why we celebrate Thanksgiving; to give thanks to God for everything He has done for us over the years, and especially this year because He has allowed us to live to see another year. For this, let us give thanks to God by ensuring that we sustain the church whose mission is spreading the Good News of His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. This mission cannot be achieved without us giving of our time, talent and treasure to sustain the church.

I know these are challenging times, but this church is yours. It is the place you come to seek God's blessings, solace, protection and peace. This is where we all come together as a community to raise our voices to make our petitions to Almighty God, asking for His protection and provision of our needs so that we can thrive. You are the church, the Body of Christ. You do all you can to maintain your human body. How about doing all you can to maintain your spiritual body? All that you have was given to you by God, so why don't you cheerfully give Him some in return? Give joyfully and abundantly based on your capacity to give, for "Our God loves a cheerful giver." *(2 Corinthians 9:6-7)*. He will reward you abundantly.

Whatever you give will be multiplied to you. We are promised in the scriptures that "A gift to God opens the way and brings the giver into the presence of God." "Give, and it will be given to you *(Luke 6:38)*". Let us give out of our gratitude for God's Blessings upon all of us and our families, wherever they may be. Let us "count our Blessings, and name them one by one." The Apostle Paul tells that "A man reaps what he sows, and whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life." *(Galatians 6:7-8)*.

At Thanksgiving, we reflect upon God's abundant provision. It is a time for praising God for his many provisions in our lives and a time to celebrate His faithfulness which endures until this day. Let's give thanks.

Throughout the year, you have been called upon to give to your church, and you have been generous with your time, talent and treasure because you believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive. For it is in giving that we truly receive. It is in giving that we show our gratefulness to God, and it is in giving that we love God and others through our good deeds. We thank you all so very much.

On this Thanksgiving season, we call upon your generosity to your church once again, to give of your treasure. Your awesome support has helped us to meet our financial obligations to achieve our mission. God bless you.

I, your priest, continue to pray for you, that our God continues to grant you the abundance of His Grace, so that you will give back to Him by giving to His church, the Body of His Son. May all your prayers and petitions be granted.

A Blessed and Happy Thanksgiving to you and all your loved ones.

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