**From the Desk Of Fr. John**

**Happy Thanksgiving Weekend!** This holiday comes along quickly and then it is over as quick- ly. However, it is our opportunity to offer Thanks- giving to God for all of His blessings. We offer our thanks for our nation and the freedoms we enjoy. We thank Him for our families and all our loved ones, as they are true gifts from God. We can thank Him for our faith, which opens us to the wonder and mystery of God’s love for us.

It is good for us to reflect on each day…thanking the Lord for all of His blessings.

Each time that we gather for the Holy Eucharist, we offer thanks. We may recall the introduction of the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass…, which we call the Preface. The priest announces to us… ‘Lift up your hearts…Let us give thanks to the Lord our God…It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks…’ Eucharist is the name we give to our prayer…it means ‘Thanksgiving.’ This is what Jesus did His whole life and invites us to offer that same thanks to the Father.

We have so much to be thankful for…and we of- fer our time…our talent…and our treasure to continue the work and mission of Jesus in spreading the Kingdom of God.

**As we approach the end of the ‘Liturgical Year,’ the lessons of scripture begin to turn our minds and hearts to the ‘end times’**… ‘The final days’… the coming of the fullness of God’s Kingdom. Jesus tries to help His disciples to be prepared…not for military triumph and the defeat of the Roman Empire…but the Kingdom of God’s Reign over the hearts and lives of His people.

The farewell discourses of famous people set the stage for what is to come and what their follow- ers will have to face. These teachings often help their disciples and followers to ready themselves for the challenges that they will face in the future. Jesus helps His disciples to realize that the king- doms of this world are passing away. That the final redemption and transformation of the world will change the way we see things…it will be transformed and renewed. There is something special also,…the one who is over all… ‘The Son

of Man’…will not be one of the political leaders of the world…but He will be coming in the clouds… ‘With great power and glory.’

The things of this world are passing…now is the time for us to hold firm to the words and teaching of Jesus. Besides holding on to and keeping His words…, which remain true always…we are to continue the work of witnessing and sharing them with others. We are getting the world ready for the fullness of God’s kingdom…unlike the changing political kingdoms of the world. Will we remain faithful? Will we continue to live and wit- ness our faith?

**Now we arrive at the conclusion and culmina- tion of the Liturgical Year…The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King of the Uni- verse** (The Thirty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time). Pope Pius XI instituted this feast in 1925… ‘In response to the destructive forces of the age.’ We can just imagine the challenges facing the world at that time…following WW I… revolutions…9 million soldiers were killed…6 mil- lion civilians lost their lives. The turmoil of power changing hands and governments overturned.

The Pope insisted… ‘That the only weapon against such forces and chaos is the acknowl- edgement of the sovereignty of Christ.’

**In the world we have today…power… prestige…possessions…pleasure…appear at the top of the list of what leaders of nations seek for themselves.** The idea of serving… and caring for their people or the people of any other nation…falls by the wayside. The question of Pilate to Jesus at His trial shows the contempt of the world toward faith and service… ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ Jesus simply stated… ‘My kingdom does not belong to this world. If My kingdom belonged to this world, My attendants would be fighting to keep Me from being handed over…’ Whose kingdom do we serve?