

## Thanksgiving Sermon 2009

When it was time in our little ecumenical clergy circle to talk about Thanksgiving ... I remember clearly ... there was a moment of silence and then all eyes seemed to be looking in my direction ... I am not sure what this says about us as clergy .....but my reaction was: oh boy they are looking at me ....

Now, here I am!

Now, the good thing about me preaching at Thanksgiving is that I don't really know what Thanksgiving is about .. I mean, being a foreigner and not having grown up with Thanksgiving.

I did figure out in the last 20 years I have been in this country that Thanksgiving is big ... and from the emotions of the people ... it's actually very big!

Where I come from we had just a little harvest thanksgiving on the first Sunday in October and the only visible sign were all the vegetables and fruits around the altar for that Sunday service.

So, once I was over the looks of my colleagues, I actually thought it a good idea for me to preach on the topic ... it would get me to really think about this holiday .....

So what is Thanksgiving?

After a rather short look into the history of thanksgiving .. I decided that it didn't make sense to talk about the when, where, and what was and is the first thanksgiving ...

What I did glean, though, was that all of those events had something to do with giving thanks to God for enough food, safety and survival.

It is not too hard to imagine how grateful those people must have felt that they survived ... there were many who didn't!

So what is it we are thankful for on Thursday ... what is it we give thanks to God for?

Let's take three minutes to think about this ...

I don't know what you were thinking about and what came up for you,  
What you could be thankful for ... Give thanks to God for?

But let me share some things that came up for me .. I do confess I had a few  
hours to think about this ....

After I went through all the material things I am thankful for I got stuck with  
How difficult it sometimes is to say thank you!, but also how rewarding it  
can be to say thank you!

If you want to know how difficult this is think of a person you don't like and  
then 'thank God' for having created that person.

And if you want to know how rewarding it can be start to say 'thank you'  
more often. Just think about yourself; how our own attitude changes when  
someone gives us the gift of a heartfelt 'thank you'.

Saying 'thank you' acknowledges the many many gifts of love and kindness  
that surround us on a daily bases. The faster my life becomes the less I tend  
to see those gifts. Looking for ways to say 'thank you' is actually something  
that slows my life down and makes me pay attention ... to other people and  
myself.

We all have tomorrow to think about one thing we are thankful for in each  
person sitting around the dinner table on Thursday .. surprise you family  
with a thank you for each person ...I know that can be difficult sometimes  
..so it's good we all have tomorrow to think about it...

But I guarantee you that it will change the mood of the conversation in the  
same way you feel after a heartfelt thank you.

I personally ended my reflection at the point where I became aware that  
what I am most thankful for is to feel that God indeed loves me ... many  
years of my life I didn't feel good enough .. I didn't feel loved .. and I am  
very grateful for God finally getting this into my had: I love you!

Let me conclude with 2 prayers from another Thanksgiving which means  
Eucharist, lord supper, evening meal or agape meal.

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Amen and may we all have a love filled Thanksgiving!