

Some thoughts leading up to our Thanksgiving holiday...

I feel fortunate that I am able to begin each day at Bishop Chatard with time and a place for prayer. I arrive early and take advantage of the quiet time, alone in our chapel. My prayer follows a pattern. I fight the urge to ask for something for myself right away, but instead begin with prayers of gratitude. I follow this by praying for family and the needs of others and finally, praying for my own needs.

As we head toward the Thanksgiving holiday, I reflect on all those prayers of gratitude I have shared with God over the past year. While I occasionally thank God for small victories – we paid our bills this month, the priest showed up on time for Mass, a conflict was resolved, etc. – more often than not I find myself thanking God for the people He has put in my life.

When I count my blessings, I count people. I am blessed to have Carol, my best friend who said “I do” at the altar over 36 years ago. I am blessed to have the four best kids in the world as my children. (You may think your own children are the best in the world, but please note that your children could not possibly rank any higher than 5th) I am blessed to have had a mother (who passed away too soon at 43) and father that taught me right from wrong, brought me up in the faith, and taught me what it means to serve others. I am blessed to have been and continue to be a part of some wonderful faith communities. These communities are gifts not because of the buildings or the “stuff,” but because of the people who fill those pews, hallways, classrooms and offices.

I now put in writing what I say to God each day in gratitude:

Lord,

Thank you for the gift of family.

Thank you for the people, both those living and those with You,
who have impacted my life.

Thank you for the opportunity to worship and work in places where there are people
who make me better by simply being around them.

Thank you for putting people in my life who challenge me.

I know that I am blessed and I pray to stay mindful of paying it forward.

I hope that there are others praying to you today who are thanking you for some small
part *I* have played in *their* lives.

In gratitude, I pray.

Amen.

May you and your family enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday and take time to reflect on the blessings – the people – God has put in your lives.

Happy Thanksgiving!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bishop Chatard".