



Message for Thanksgiving
13 October 2025
His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On the occasion of our upcoming Thanksgiving celebrations, I am reaching out to wish you all Happy Thanksgiving. This holiday offers us a sacred time and unique opportunity to rediscover the spirituality of gratitude and renew our commitment to living a life rooted in thanksgiving. When viewed in the light of the Holy Jubilee Year of Hope, Thanksgiving becomes more than a familial or cultural celebration, it becomes a profound expression of our relationship with God, the giver of all good gifts.

At its heart, Catholic spirituality is Eucharistic. The very word “Eucharist” comes from the Greek *eucharistein* or *eulogein*, meaning “thanksgiving,” which recalls an ancient blessing that praised God’s works of creation, redemption and sanctification (*cf.* CCC 1328). In the Old Testament, bread and wine “were offered in sacrifice among the first fruits” in gratitude to God (CCC 1334). When we celebrate the Eucharist each week, indeed each day, we participate in the supreme act of praise and thanksgiving in which the Church unites herself to Christ’s perfect offering of gratitude to the Father (*cf. Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 8). In this way, the Eucharist not only sustains us but also teaches us how to live with hearts attuned to God’s blessings and shaped by gratitude. Thanksgiving, then, is not simply a once-a-year holiday, but the very posture of the Christian soul (*cf.* Basil the Great, *Homily V, In martyrem Julittam*).

A spirituality of gratitude and thanksgiving pushes us deeper, to give thanks not only for material blessings but also for the gift of faith, for the communion of the Church, for the forgiveness of sins, and for the hope that does not disappoint (*cf. Rom 5:5*). Gratitude is a way of perceiving the world: we see creation as a gift, history as salvation unfolding, and our lives as entrusted with the precious mission of Jesus Christ. Regarding our mission, the word “Mass” comes from the Latin word *missio* which means “mission”, thereby uniting the Eucharist as an act of thanksgiving with our Christian vocation and mission (*cf.* CCC 1332).



During this Jubilee Year of Hope, we have been invited “to recognize the immense goodness present in our world, lest we be tempted to think ourselves overwhelmed by evil and violence” (*Spes non Confundit*, 7). To discern God’s grace present and at work in the world today and in our past is no small task, but it is absolutely crucial in the spiritual life; our Christian walk of faith (cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book VIII). The thankful heart remembers God’s past fidelity and so finds strength to believe in his future blessings. Just as Israel gave thanks for liberation from Egypt and for entrance into the Promised Land, the Church today gives thanks for Christ’s victory over sin and death and looks forward to the fullness of the Kingdom (cf. John Cassian, *The Conferences*, IX, ix-xiv). Gratitude roots us in the memory of salvation, while the theological virtue of Hope stretches us toward its fulfillment.

I am reminded of the words of St. Paul, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 *Thes* 5:16-18). During this Thanksgiving Weekend, I encourage those who gather together to begin their time by prayerfully recalling what they are grateful for in their lives. After each person’s remembrance, we can conclude with the response: “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever” (*Ps.* 136). In our parishes, I would like to invite communities to celebrate the liturgical setting of Thanksgiving Day Mass on the Monday of Thanksgiving weekend. During this liturgy we are reminded that God’s gifts are limitless. We also pray for the grace to treasure all that God gives, to help us share his gifts with others, and to use them for his glory (cf. CCCB, *Roman Missal: Thanksgiving Day Mass*). Finally, I am inviting you to cultivate grateful hearts that extend beyond a single day or weekend and that do not depend on circumstances but flow, rather, from the knowledge that “every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above” (*Jas* 1:17) and we simply share in God’s love and generosity.

In this Holy Jubilee Year of Hope, Thanksgiving is more than tradition - it is a sacramental reminder of God’s love that finds its fullest expression in the Sunday Eucharist. May God bless you and your family and friends on this Thanksgiving weekend. Know that I give thanks to God for all of you, for the wonderful People of the Archdiocese of Toronto. I am grateful for the generous ministry of our priests and deacons; for the prophetic witness of those women and men in consecrated life; for the strong and committed faith life of our families; for the dynamic and life-giving outreach of our social and healthcare institutions; for the fidelity and loyalty to the Gospel and Church teaching of our educational institutes; for the fruitful cooperation with civil and governmental agencies and; for the beauty, truth and goodness of the Catholic faith seen and expressed in a myriad of ways throughout our blessed archdiocese. Be assured of my prayers for you and your loved ones. Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us and make us truly grateful disciples of your Son.