



Do you have a favorite Thanksgiving movie? Certainly, if you asked me this questions about Christmas, I would say *it's a Wonderful Life*, hands down. Others might favor *A Christmas Story*, the many versions of *A Christmas Carol* with Scrooge, perhaps others such as *The Grinch*, *Elf*, or *Frosty*. There is no shortage of holiday films. But how about your favorite Thanksgiving movie? Certainly, the classic movie *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* comes to mind. There is a movie I enjoy that begins and ends on a Thanksgiving Day called *Broadway Danny Rose* directed by Woody Allan. Another movie that gets mentioned is also a favorite of mine. It is called *The Blind Side*, a true story based on a family named the Tuohy's helping and then legally adopting a young man named Michael Oher who is basically homeless. Michael turns out to be a fabulous football player who has just retired after a very successful time in college and the pros. There is scene in the movie where the entire family on Thanksgiving Day is sitting in front of the television joyfully watching football as they grab their Thanksgiving dinner on the run. Michael chooses to sit down at the table and ignore the football game. He longs for a traditional family Thanksgiving, something he has never experienced in his life. Soon, the rest of the family realizes that Thanksgiving is about more than watching football, sit down, pray and then begin to share the meal.

I know I get annoyed a bit when I constantly hear have a good Holiday or Seasons greetings. I want to hear Merry Christmas but I figure during the season of peace and it is not worth arguing about how another person feels. I also do not like when people say have a great Turkey Day or today is football day. Although not a religious holiday like the feast of the Immaculate Conception or All Saints Day, I think today is one of the most sacred days of the year. It is such a simple day, except perhaps for those who are cooking the dinner or stuck in traffic on the

Southern State. Thanksgiving brings us to some very basic core values: we come together as family and friends; we want this day to be shared with others; we also have a strong principle that if at all possible, no one should eat alone on this day. Our gratitude on this day leads us to want to help others by donations of food to those in need and by helping at soup kitchens. The days before are filled with people seeking to donate Turkeys to families who may not be able to afford them. Gratitude leads to generosity.

Being together with others is essential. Secondly, we eat together. Let us not take that for granted. We live in a culture where we are very much on the go; work, soccer practice, dance class, meetings, can make it very challenging to have a family dinner around a table. Perhaps, even more difficult is to get everyone to put down their cell phone for an hour so and have the experience of actually talking with one another. The ritual of the food is important. There has to be turkey and stuffing. After that, each family may have their own tradition. When I sit down to our family Thanksgiving dinner we will have *the green stuff*. *The green stuff* may not sound too attractive, but it is actually called *cottage cheese delight* which is a mixture of cottage cheese, lime Jell-O and whipped cream and cherries. One of our now deceased cousins introduced that dish to our Thanksgiving table and we never fail to have as we say a prayer for her as we eat. One of the kids will ask why we call it *the green stuff* and we will explain that we are Brooklyn people and *cottage cheese delight* sounds too pretentious. And, God forbid if someone forgets to put marshmallows on the sweet potatoes. Certainly the meal is rich in tradition and we very much feel the presence of those who have gone home to God with whom we shared this great feast in the past. On this day we pray. This is day that every family, no matter who secular or what religious denomination, lifts their hearts to God and prays in gratitude for their blessing.

That is what we are doing here this morning at St. Martin's. We are gathering together. Everybody is welcome here. We greet each other and listen to the story of how our God who has in his infinite love left us the great gift of himself in his Bible that tells our family history all the way back to the story of creation. We listen, we pray, we sing, and we are a family around this table. We live the words that Jesus gave us the night before he died: *Do this in memory of me*. So, we

break the bread and pour the wine that becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus. This meal moves us into a profound intimacy with God who has become the Bread of life for us. I love the music that we sing here at St. Martins; my favorite song is *How Beautiful is the Body of Christ*. The Body of Christ: beautiful when He walked the face of the earth, gloriously beautiful in his resurrected Body, and wonderful in the diversity and humanity that makes up us, the Body of Christ here on earth. The word *Eucharist* is the Greek one for thanksgiving.

Our Mass ends with the words *God the Mass is ended*. We go forward thanking for the gift of life, our faith, our family and friends, our nation, our world. We do not seek to be thankful for a day but to live in the spirit of genuine spirit of the virtue of thanksgiving recognizing that every breath and moment is a gift from God. All is grace. We will receive bread at the end of this Eucharist to take home. Although you may shopped for the perfect rolls or baked a homemade loaf of warm bread, the bread we bring home reminds us that what we do later in the day at home around our table is a continuation of this holy meal. God is good all the time. Amen