

# Giving thanks one of four prayer forms

Thanksgiving might be considered the perfect holiday in the calendar's lineup. No shopping for gifts, no wrapping required, no cookie-baking necessary, and most folks are treated to an extra day off from work to round out a perfectly good four-day weekend.

Thanksgiving is a time to feast on moist turkey (optimistically), cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes with marshmallow topping, fluffy stuffing, and Aunt Faye's mouth-watering pumpkin pie.

"What we're really talking about," wrote the late author Erma Bombeck, "is a wonderful day set aside on the fourth Thursday of November when no one diets ... why else would they call it Thanksgiving?"

Although the holiday is not a Catholic one, it was designated initially as a day of public thanksgiving "and prayer" by President George Washington in 1789.

The act of thanksgiving is one of the four forms of prayer recognized by the Catholic Church - thanksgiving, adoration, petition, and reparation (sorrow).

"When you have an attitude of gratitude," said Father Martin Nocchi, director of the Monsignor O'Dwyer Retreat House, Sparks, "I think we need to look at everything as gifts and that is really the highest form, not only a form of prayer, but in recognizing the presence of God in everyone around us."

Although not mandatory to attend Mass on Thanksgiving, some parishes encourage attendance by scheduling special Masses or interfaith prayer services.

Father Nocchi agrees with this practice because "my mother used to make me go. She would make us feel guilty by saying, 'You have a lot to be thankful for.' The older I get, the more I see the truth in that. There is a lot to be thankful for."

A Thanksgiving Prayer

Dear Lord,

Today we give thanks for our many blessings  
as we pray for those in need.

We give thanks for our family and friends  
as we pray for those who are lonely.

We give thanks for our freedoms  
as we pray for those who are oppressed.

We give thanks for our good health  
as we pray for those who are ill.

We give thanks for our comfort and prosperity  
as we share our blessings with others.

On this day of Thanksgiving, may the love of God enfold us,  
the peace of God dwell within us and the joy of God uplift us.  
Amen.

([www.catholic.org/prayers](http://www.catholic.org/prayers))