As they have since I first came to Burlington, a number of my family, including my mother, will be journeying this week to my home for Thanksgiving. Others will be coming up on Friday after spending Thanksgiving Day with their in-laws. There’s lot of room in the old rectory for everybody, and the dining room accommodates us all around one table. We have plenty of time to enjoy each other’s company and, I have to say, I do a real good job on the turkey. The only problem is that there are not quite enough couches and easy chairs to handle the post-meal nap.

Supposedly, eating a lot of turkey makes one sleepy. I guess I never knew how many people eat turkey before coming to Mass. …

There’s a lot of jokes out there about people falling asleep during the homily at Mass: A priest says to the wife of a man who has fallen asleep during his homily, “Madame, can you wake up your husband?” to which she replies, “You put him to sleep, you wake him up.” Another one involves a priest, who trying to be magnanimous as a mother takes out a crying baby, says, “That’s all right, he can stay. He’s not bothering me,” to which she replies, “Yeah, but your bothering him.”

Like, you, I’ve sat through many homilies that just seem to go on and on. When I taught preaching in the seminary, we used to talk about this as a failure “to land the plane.” Just when you thought the priest was finishing — “landing the plane” — he would take off again in another flight of elocution. As someone who does a lot of preaching now myself, I always try and land the plane on time. Still, I haven’t always been successful. I used to be able to tell if I had lost my community’s attention by their subtle (or not so subtle) glances at their watches. Now, since most folks don’t wear watches anymore, the hint instead may be a quick glance at one’s mobile device.

During this week in which we give thanks to God for all of His gifts and blessings, I, like you, am grateful for so many things: family, friends, life, food, shelter, good health, faith. … The list goes on and on. I’ve tried to cultivate this sense of thankfulness throughout the whole year. It forms and informs my whole life as a Catholic. As one Christian preacher put it, “I like to have that attitude of gratitude. It keeps me focused on God’s gifts and how I am using them for His purposes.” An “attitude of gratitude” fostered in our lives calls forth from us a response of praise and thanksgiving to God “from whom all blessings flow” and a desire to use them as Christ asks us to.

So allow me to use the gift of this page to say how grateful I am to you, my brothers and sisters here in the Vermont. In spite of all of the scandals of the past and the recent revelations of the present, you are still here in this church, still loving and supporting your priests (even when they have a problem “landing the plane”) and still spreading the Good News that Jesus is our Lord and Savior in and through His Church.

In the original Greek, “Eucharist” means to give thanks. In all of its meanings and modes, may we always be a Eucharistic people.

God bless. Enjoy the turkey … and the nap that follows.

Yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Bishop of Burlington

Pope's recent declaration on the death penalty gives us the opportunity to look at the Church’s teachings on respect for all life, from conception to natural death.

11/24 SATURDAY
Ascension Parish Christmas Craft Fair
Georgia Elementary & Middle School, Georgia
9 am - 3 pm
Admission is FREE! Along with lots of crafts, we will be having a silent auction and a visit by Santa. FOR MORE INFO: Andrea (802) 578-8043

11/30 FRIDAY
Saint Albans Youth Night
Saint Mary Parish Center, St. Albans
7:30 - 9:30 pm
All teens in grades 7 – 12 are welcome to join us! A night of fun, fellowship and faith. Most nights begin with a good amount of fun, large group games/activities, reflection/talk, small group discussion and prayer. Join a great group of teens from the Franklin County area! All are welcome!

12/01 SATURDAY
All Saints Parish Annual Christmas Bazaar
All Saints Parish Hall, Richford • 9 am - 2 pm
Please join us for our annual Christmas Bazaar!!! We will have our All Saints table, a white elephant table, homemade fudge, fresh homemade baked goods, and a silent auction & 50/50 raffle. Enjoy a light breakfast and delicious lunch with a choice of various homemade soups and sandwiches. Buy your Christmas gifts from our many local artists and crafters!!! Questions? Call 848-7741.

12/08 SATURDAY
Padre Pio Devotions
St. Lawrence, Essex Junction
8 - 10 am
Please join us at 8am for rosary and reconciliation, Mass at 8:30 followed by special intentions for the intercession of Saint Padre Pio and learning about his life, ministry and spiritual gifts. For December 8 only this will take place at St. Lawrence Church followed with a presentation in the Fr. Maloney Room.

12/08 SATURDAY
Blood Drive
St. Isidore, Montgomery • 9 am - 2 pm
Hosted by St. Isidore Parish and sponsored by Montgomery Emergency Services. Local raffles with prizes. To schedule an appointment, go to www.redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS. New donors are needed. Please consider giving the gift of life. Walk-ins are welcome!

12/08 SATURDAY
CyO Basketball Clinics
Rice Memorial High School, S. Burlington
9:30 am - 12:30 pm
Attention all 5 – 8 graders! Come on out to Rice Memorial High School for these basketball clinics. Learn skills, play and have fun with other youth from around Burlington! Open to both boys and girls! Clinics also run on Nov. 3 & 10.

12/08 SATURDAY
K of C Bingo
All Saints Dorion Hall, Richford • 1 - 4:30 pm
Doors open at 11:30am and the games begin at 1pm. Homemade lunch, desserts & beverages are offered. Pull tickets will also be available. Proudly sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, Council #2610.

12/18 SUNDAY
Rich Harvest of Organ Classics
Sacred Heart / St. Francis de Sales, Bennington
3 pm
Masterpieces by Bach, Mulet, Guilmant, and others will sparkle and resound throughout the church. Free and open to the public, facilities are fully accessible.

UPCOMING EVENTS

BISHOP’S ANNUAL APPEAL

Thank you to all who have generously given to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal in support of the Vermont Catholic community and the many ministries that it provides throughout the state. There is still time to make your gift at bishopsappealvt.org

GOAL $2,709,944
PAID $2,177,799
78.5%
PLEDGED $2,460,580
92.1%
(as of November 6, 2018)

DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON CAREERS

Diocese: Marriage & Family Life Coordinator
Diocese: Respect Life Coordinator
Diocese: Youth and Young Adult Ministry Administrative Assistant
Vermont Catholic Charities: Accountant
Vermont Catholic Charities: Residential Care Home Administrator, Burlington
Vermont Catholic Charities: Residential Care Home Administrator, Rutland
For More Info: vermontcatholic.org/careers

To see more events or to submit your event to the diocesan calendar: vermontcatholic.org/events

DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON