I called a priest friend of mine the other day. He teaches in Catholic university and is a scholar of the biblical Greek language. I wanted to make sure that I had my “Greek” right when it came to the ancient Church’s usage of the word “eucharist.” I knew that the word literally translates as “thanksgiving,” but I also remembered from my own studies of the ancient liturgical texts that it was used more as verb, “to give thanks,” than a noun, “thanksgiving.” My friend concurred with my memory and noted that in the ancient Church, the language of which was primarily Greek, the texts in reference to what we call the Eucharist, most often talked about the liturgy as “the giving of thanks.” In fact, one of the oldest texts we have from the late first century to early second century, called the Didache, when it speaks of the early gathering of the community for the bread and the cup reads, “Now this is how you are to give thanks ... .” The Eucharist then was understood to be more of an action than an object or an event.

Now, you may wonder why I am sharing this with you. It seems a little esoteric, a little too far removed in history. Indeed, we have for centuries referred to the Mass as the celebration of the Eucharist (an event) and the consecrated host as the Eucharist (a holy object). But we also celebrate the Eucharist as an act of thanksgiving. Certainly the words of the liturgy bear this out when we hear, “It is right to give Him thanks and praise ... we do well always to give you thanks ... .” But sometimes this act of thanksgiving can be overwhelmed by so much of what is going on within it — remembrance, consecration, communion, etc. Perhaps in this week in which we celebrate our national holiday of Thanksgiving we might discover anew this joyful part of our tradition, the Eucharist as “the giving of thanks.”

Similarly, the full celebration of the Eucharist as an act of thanksgiving as well as an event and a holy food and object of devotion can inform our secular celebration of Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving Day can simply be an event, a holiday, a day when we gather with family and friends. It can also be simply the meal we sit down for on Thanksgiving. Or it could be a collective — a day, a meal and an act, “to give thanks” — to give thanks for so many things, so many people, so many blessings, so much abundance in our lives and out of gratitude and thankfulness to use the treasures and talents that we have wisely out of love for God and our neighbor.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Bishop of Burlington


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UPCOMING EVENTS

11|26 TUESDAY
Rice Memorial High School
STUNT NITE
Flynn Center, Burlington
2 Shows: 4pm and 8pm. All seats, both shows — $20.

12|02 MONDAY
Love and Mercy: St. Faustina Movie Screening
Palace 9 Cinemas, South Burlington • 7 pm
There will be a one time showing of Love and Mercy, a new movie which sheds light on the life and vision of St. Faustina.

12|03 TUESDAY
Knights of Columbus Annual Christmas Party
St. Mark, Burlington - 6 - 8:30 pm
Prayer service and lighting of the Christmas tree with a potluck. The celebration is open to all families and friends.

12|05 THURSDAY
A Day of the Eucharist
St. Thomas, Underhill Center • 8 am - 8 pm
This day of Eucharistic adoration will begin with Holy Mass at 8 am. At the beginning of each hour we will pray various Catholic devotions throughout the day. FOR MORE INFO: Parish office (802) 899-4632.

12|07 SATURDAY
Our Lady of Fatima Devotions
Holy Family, Essex Junction • 8:30 am - 10 am
Rosary starts at 8 am followed by Mass, Special Intentions for the intercession of Saint Padre Pio and then learning about Padre Pio’s life, ministry and spiritual gifts will follow in the Holy Family Parish Hall after Mass.

12|08 SUNDAY
Annual “Messiah Sing”
Our Lady of the Snows, Woodstock • 4 - 6 pm
Our parish’s contribution to Woodstock’s Wassail Weekend. There will be a professional orchestra and soloists; but anyone who wishes to sign may join the Chorus. Just bring a libretto. The event is open to the public, and is a truly enjoyable Advent tradition.

12|11 WEDNESDAY
Vermont Catholic Professionals Christmas Social
Holy Family Parish Hall, Essex Jct. • 6 - 8 pm
Join VCP for a Christmas Social with guest speaker Mary Beth Pinard, Executive Director of Vermont Catholic Charities. Donations will be collected for Vermont Catholic Charities’ Advent Appeal. Beverages to be provided — please bring a dish to share.

12|14 SATURDAY
Padre Pio Devotions
Holy Family, Essex Junction • 8 - 10 am
Rosary starts at 8 am followed by Mass,

DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON CAREERS

Diocese: Respect Life Coordinator
Diocese: Senior Accountant
Diocese: Technical Support Specialist
Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Williston: Administrative Assistant
The Loretto Home, Rutland: Residential Care Positions
Our Lady of the Angels Parish, Randolph: Administrative Assistant
Our Lady of Seven Dolors, Fair Haven: Organist or Keyboardist/Choir Director
St. Joseph Residential Care Home, Burlington: LPN
Vermont Catholic Charities: Counselor

For More Info: vermontcatholic.org/careers

12|14 SATURDAY
Bingo
All Saints Parish Hall, Richford
11:30 am - 5 pm
Doors open at 11:30 am, games start at 1 pm. Refreshments and pull tickets will be available. Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

12|22 SUNDAY
Advent Lessons and Carols
Sacred Heart Saint Francis de Sales, Bennington • 2 pm
Friends of all faith traditions are warmly invited to gather for this solemn offering of Old Testament Scripture and music.

CRAFT FAIR & MARKET DIRECTORY

11|30
Annual Craft Fair
Ascension Church, Georgia
9 am - 3 pm

12|06
Our Lady of Seven Dolors Christmas Bazaar
St. Mary’s School, Fair Haven
11 am - 6 pm

12|06
Christmas Bazaar
Our Lady of the Angels, Randolph
2 pm - 5 pm

12|07
Christmas Bazaar
All Saints Dorion Hall, Richford
9 am - 2 pm

12|07
Christmas Bazaar
St. Paul’s Christmas Bazaar
Town Hall, Orrell
9 am - 2 pm

12|07
Christmas Bazaar and Craft Fair
St. Patrick, Fairfield
9 am - 3 pm

12|07
Old Fashioned Christmas Bazaar
St. Frances Cabrini, West Pawlet
10 am - 2 pm

12|07
Christmas Bazaar
Our Lady of the Angels, Randolph
9 am - 2 pm

12|07
Christmas Bazaar
St. Anthony, Bethel
9 am - 2 pm

12|14
Christmas Bazaar
St. Jude, Hinesburg
9 am - 3 pm