



# Campus Ministry Online

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**For the Poor  
Souls:**

***Eternal rest grant  
unto them, O  
Lord.***

***And let perpetual  
light shine upon  
them.***

***May they rest in  
peace. Amen.***

Almighty and  
Everlasting God,  
who dost enkindle the  
flame of Thy love in  
the hearts of the  
saints,  
grant unto us the  
same faith and power  
of love;  
that, as we rejoice in  
their triumphs  
we may profit by their  
examples, through  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Religious Freedom & Life Issues

*“Brothers and Sisters, let us hold fast to our confession . . . without fear, without confusion, without apology! St. Paul, of course, is talking about our confession of Faith – about the fact that we should be steadfast in our living and preaching the message of Jesus Christ. He tells us we can do it because we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens – Jesus, the Son of God. In other words, we are following the example of the revealed Word of God himself – Jesus Christ. And St. Paul isn’t talking in theoretical terms – he was encouraging people who in his day were already facing persecution, horrible forms of torture and death - because they insisted on bringing their faith into the public forum.*

Today, we don’t face the threat of imprisonment or death for speaking out on our beliefs, but I think we face something more insidious, and more paralyzing – that’s fear. We are afraid of saying something that might get a negative reaction from someone else. We’re afraid of being unpopular. We’re afraid of not having an answer for someone who challenges us. . .

It’s clear during this political season that some Catholics shy away from speaking the truth – in public and even in the privacy of the voting booth. Several weeks ago in my homily I mentioned the need to closely examine our behaviors in light of the teachings of Jesus Christ – and among several things, that we needed to consider whether our vote in a couple of weeks would reflect the teachings of Jesus and His Church. After Mass someone said to me “You know, we shouldn’t impose our Catholic values on other people.”

Why do we apologize for being Catholic, or for promoting Catholic values in the public policy arena? Maybe we’re confused about what it means to be Catholic – we treat it like we are part of some type of club – like the Rotary or the Sierra Club or the Bocce Ball Club - with a nice set of values, but only if you care to join. Being Catholic isn’t about a name or belonging to an organization – it’s not about “Catholic” values – it’s about God’s values. It’s about our response to our Baptismal call. It’s believing first and foremost in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and about believing that what He said – including His command to “go and Baptize the Whole World” – is **good** for the whole world because He said it was. It’s about believing that the Catholic Church is only authentic when it teaches what Jesus taught. . .

Is that something to be afraid of? It can certainly lead to persecution at times – in the press and even from people within our own Catholic faith – but look who we’re following? The same Jesus who went gladly to His death because He challenged the authorities’ beliefs about marriage and divorce when He said *“From the beginning God made them male and female . . . For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.”* The same Jesus who challenged His society for putting more emphasis on their dietary customs than on loving their fellow man: *“Nothing that enters one from outside can defile but the things that come from within are what defile. From within people, from their hearts, come evil thoughts, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, envy, arrogance, folly.* The same Jesus who challenges every politician and Christian voter in this country – as He did 2000 years ago: *This people honors me with their lips but their hearts are far from me.*

God calls us to make our religious faith the guiding force in our private and public lives. I think we all know that every law, every public policy, is based on some type of values – and it is passed based on the moral convictions of those voting for it. We can either make sure those laws are built

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Help Me  
Thanksgiving Day Prayer

O God, when I have food,  
help me to remember the hungry;  
When I have work,  
help me to remember the jobless;  
When I have a home,  
help me to remember those who have no home at all;  
When I am without pain,  
help me to remember those who suffer,  
And remembering,  
help me to destroy my complacency;  
bestir my compassion,  
and be concerned enough to help;  
By word and deed,  
those who cry out for what we take for granted.  
Amen.

*These newsletters are a service of Mater Dei Campus Ministry in an attempt to:*

1. *Share information about our Catholic faith to keep our community aware of some of the teachings of our tradition.*
2. *Update our community of changes in understandings and rituals*
3. *Assist parents with the faith formation of their youth.*
4. *Provide links to sites with helpful information on faith and parenting.*

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on the teachings of Jesus – or we can allow others to impose their values on our society. The Church teaches that it is the responsibility of all Christians to vote for candidates and laws based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. “*Render to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar, and to God the things that belong to God.*” For us, as Catholics, to do otherwise is bad citizenship. It runs the risk of *rendering to Caesar the things that belong to God.*

Certainly none of us should find any of this a surprise – the Church has spoken out on these principles consistently from the earliest times, following in the footsteps of Jesus and His Apostles and the early Church. Our call as Catholics is to do likewise – without fear, without confusion, and without apology.

Here’s the Good News: St. Paul reminds us that we can: *confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.*

*Let us pray:* "Lord Jesus, don't let us be lukewarm We pray that our faith becomes like a fire in us and that you will use us to set others alight." Homily by Deacon John Heithaus.

## Saints & Souls

All Saints Day, the day on which Catholics celebrate all the saints, known and unknown, is a surprisingly old feast. It arose out of the Christian tradition of celebrating the martyrdom of saints on the anniversary of their martyrdom. When martyrdoms increased during the persecutions of the late Roman Empire, local dioceses instituted a common feast day in order to ensure that all martyrs, known and unknown, were properly honored.

All Souls Day follows All Saints Day, and commemorates the faithful departed, i.e. those who die with God's grace and friendship. Catholics believe that not all those who die in God's grace are immediately ready for the Beatific vision, i.e. the reality and goodness of God and heaven, so they must be purified of "lesser faults," and the temporal effects of sin. The Catholic Church calls this purification of the elect, "purgatory." The Catholic teaching on Purgatory essentially requires belief in two realities: 1. that there will be a purification of believers prior to entering heaven and 2. that the prayers and masses of the faithful in some way benefit those in the state of purification.

## Give thanks

Soon, we Americans will once again gather around tables of food with family and friends to recall the bountiful blessings that God has freely bestowed on us and our country. “*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His loving kindness is everlasting*” (Psalm 118:1).

Thanksgiving Day in America commemorates the celebratory meal of thanksgiving that the early 17th century settlers enjoyed with the Americans who were native to the region that became known as Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Although mature Christians know that every day of their lives is a gift from God, Who is worthy of thanks, and that each passing day provides them with the opportunity to thank Him with grateful hearts, this coming Thanksgiving celebration can be an opportunity for Christians everywhere to offer God a special “*sacrifice of thanksgiving*” (Psalm 116:17). They can best accomplish this by concentrating on the things for which they have to be thankful.

“*In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus*” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

These could include families; health and well being; jobs and other sources of income; interests; and avocations that keep Christians spiritually and mentally alive; roofs over their heads, and the food on their tables.

In addition, all people who claim residency in America—whether permanent or temporary—need to be thankful that they live in this country. This is a country where when in the aftermath of a devastating terrorist attack upon our security and free democratic way of life, God's comfort and guidance was sought, as our nation pulled together and turned to Him.

Most Christians readily admit that their focus this holiday should be on giving thanks for their many blessings, for remembering time-honored customs and traditions, and for enjoying the fruits of the earth.

Try something different this Thanksgiving. Begin by praising God for His blessings first—before television, football, relatives, or turkey. Then after God has received His praise and honor, the remainder of the day can be set aside for family, fellowship, and fun with His blessings. In so doing, His peace will be upon the celebration from the beginning.