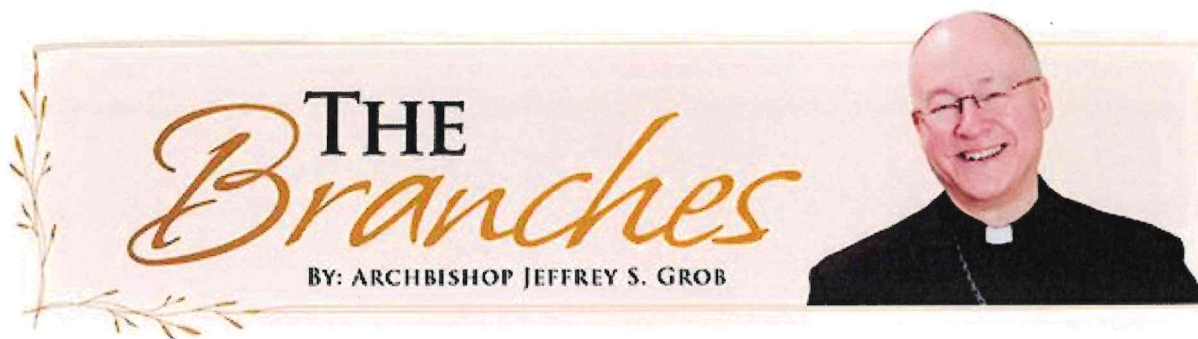




In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.
(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

November 25, 2025

Hello Everyone —

Stories taken from life are often the best teachers. Here is one from a few years ago.

On Thanksgiving Day, while watching a football game, a very successful businessman sat reflecting on his life. While doing so, he *realized* how fortunate he was to have been blessed by influential people who helped him become who he was. He decided to write to the person he believed had the greatest influence on his life.

His fourth-grade teacher quickly came to mind. Although a kind, gentle woman, she insisted that he and his classmates strive for excellence in everything they did. She challenged them to do their best whether they were doing their homework, taking exams, or completing class projects. So, he sent her a thank you note.

One day, a couple of months later, the businessman received a return letter from his former teacher. She apologized for not replying sooner but stated that his letter took some time getting to her, since she had moved in with her daughter after retiring from teaching grade school for sixty-six years.

She told him how thankful she was to have received his note and how it cheered her to find out he had learned so well his lessons in excellence. She went on to say that in her sixty-six years of teaching, this was the first thank you card she had ever received, and how grateful she was that he had taken the time to remember her.

The businessman **realized** how fortunate he was . . .

That's the crux of the story — isn't it? It is the essential crux of any experience that results in thankfulness. You see, at the heart of gratitude is that moment of realization:

- of realizing that some word has been uttered — or
- that some action has been performed — or
- that something has transpired which moves the recipient to be grateful for what has taken place.

The challenge, however, is the task of clearing the ground for the process of realization to occur and possessing the disposition for it. It is not unlike the spiritual journey in general, one has to make room and take the time. One also has to be willing to take a risk.

Such a realization caused George Washington to draft the first national Thanksgiving Proclamation in 1789 whereby people were called to set aside a day for “publick Thanksgiving and Prayer.” A day — as he put it — “to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God.”

The same realization compelled Abraham Lincoln to renew the practice of the yearly Thanksgiving Proclamation, when in 1863 he penned the words:

“No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out {the many blessings bestowed upon these United States}. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.” Lincoln continued, “I do, therefore, invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea, and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November {next — 1863}, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.”

It is so easy to take for granted the countless blessings of which all of us are the fortunate recipients. Tragically, it is as easy to take for granted the perfect act of Thanksgiving — namely, the Eucharist — that is made so readily available in churches, chapels, and shrines throughout the 10 counties that comprise the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Therefore, let us pause (on Thanksgiving Day — and every day) to ponder and give praise for what God continues to do for each of us — every day.

Let us acknowledge what we have the good fortune of possessing at this present moment.

Let us look forward with hope to all that is yet to come.

As I do for you, please pray for me,

Most Reverend Jeffrey S. Grob
Archbishop of Milwaukee

