

## Fr. Martin's Reflection – November 19, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May you and all your family and friends have a wonderful, joy filled Thanksgiving, filled with wonderful, happy memories. With all the challenges and difficulties life throws at us, we need a day like Thanksgiving. This is an opportunity to stop and take stock, to look around and see all the people in our lives that make us happy, safe, fulfilled, and appreciated. Sometimes those closest to us, those who mean the most to us, can often be taken for granted or we presume they know how we feel about them, why would they think otherwise? To show appreciation, or to be thankful towards family or friends is as much of a benefit to oneself as it is to the other person. To take the time to think about who it is I appreciate, who it is that makes my life meaningful, who it is I love, is to realize that you are loved by them, you are a loved person. If we can believe people love us, then we can be very sure God loves us, who possesses the greatest love of all, a love that renews, refreshes, and completely, consumes us. To have so much love from family, friends, and God is something for which to be truly thankful, so let us share that love with everyone we meet.

I am also conscious that Thanksgiving can be a very difficult time for people. A lot can happen in a year, loss of one's job, break-up of a relationship, the passing of a loved one, or simply holidays are so much trouble. So, what should one do? Breathe, simply breathe, and realize you are alive, and because you are alive you can set about making changes that will make life better for you. Simple changes, small changes, manageable changes, changes that will make a difference. But, it is also important to know that you are not alone in making these changes. If help is needed, help is here. God provides us with everything we need to achieve full, productive lives. One of our greatest challenges is letting others help us. Not seeking help or allowing others to help us is what often traps us in our own isolation. Christ said to us, **"I have come that you may have life, and have it abundantly."** (Jn 10:10) Christ desires that we have a full, happy, and love-filled life. Where you feel you are now is real, but if it's not where you want to be, turn to Christ, and seek his strength and guidance to help you get to where it is you want to be. Now believe and breathe!

***It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness at night. For you have made me glad, O Lord, in all you have done, and I sing for joy at the works of your hands. Ps 92:1-2, 4***

May you have a wonderful, grateful, and love-filled Thanksgiving.

*Fr. Martin*