



On behalf of our priests and staff, I would like to extend to each and everyone of you “Happy Thanksgiving.” It makes me so grateful to see all of you at Church today. Thank you for the music, wonderful choir! Thank you to every ministry here at CTK that truly creates a “Welcoming” and “inclusive” community.

It's the day before Thanksgiving, and the butcher is just locking up when a man begins pounding on the front door.

'Please let me in,' says the man desperately. 'I forgot to buy a turkey, and my wife will kill me if I don't come home with one.'

'Okay,' says the butcher. 'Let me see what I have left.' He goes into the freezer and discovers that there's one **last** scrawny turkey left. He brings it out to show the man.

'That's one is too skinny. What else you got?' says the man.

The butcher takes the bird back into the freezer and waits a few minutes and brings the same turkey back out to the man.

'Oh, no,' says the man, 'That one doesn't look any better. You better give me both of them!'

In the week before Thanksgiving Mary-Jo asked her class of 9 year-olds to write a paragraph entitled:

'What I am most thankful for on Thanksgiving Day'.

All Joey could write was: 'I am thankful that I'm not a turkey at Thanksgiving.'

The Pilgrims set ground at Plymouth Rock on December 11, 1620. Their first winter was devastating. At the beginning of the following fall, they had lost 46 of the original 102 who sailed on the *Mayflower*. But the harvest of 1621 was a bountiful one. And the remaining colonists decided to celebrate with a feast – including 91 natives who had helped the Pilgrims survive their first year. It is believed that the Pilgrims would not have made it through the year without the help of the natives. The pilgrims and natives sat together for a meal- that captures the spirit of Thanksgiving.

We live in a time when the spirit of the first thanksgiving is very much wanting in our nation.. There is so much tension, suspicion among natives and pilgrims, immigrants and citizens, gap between races, color, sexes and other groups seems

to widen by each day.. The chasm seems too wide to cross. Or at least that's how it looks right now.

How many of you have seen the movie "Everest". Since I am a hiker, I would like to use an image from what I love to do best. It was hard to watch at points because of the suffering endured by climbers in the face of extreme altitude and climate. The biggest nail-biter for me was watching climbers cross the deep chasms of the Khumbu Icefall. Long, fragile-looking extension ladders are stretched across the crevasses to allow climbers to move toward the peak of Mt. Everest. Some consider the crossings to be the most dangerous part of the journey, and a few years ago an experienced Nepali Sherpa fell 150 feet to his death while using a ladder bridge.

There is no pretending that the things that separate us from one another in the world and our nation do not exist. The chasms are often wide. But I hope we never see them as uncrossable.

The Gospel story today about the ten lepers is a story about a divide. These lepers were the untouchables, the unwanted.. Nobody wanted to have anything to do with them. In the biblical narrative, a leper was considered the ultimate "other," distinguishable by the white, scaly skin that was prone to painful peeling and oozing. While leprosy does not manifest in our society in the same way, the notion of "other" manifests fully today more than yesterday.

On this Thanksgiving Day, what opportunities do you have to help cross the divides that separate people from one another? Who sits at your door that you can befriend? What bridge can you build over a chasm others deem uncrossable? You and I have the power to do so!

Let us celebrate the true spirit of Thanksgiving today and every day going forward.