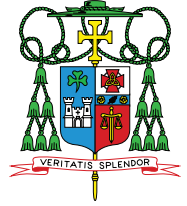




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Pastoral Letter

Message of the Most Reverend Michael F. Olson,
Bishop of Fort Worth
to the Faithful of the Diocese of Fort Worth
for the Celebration of Thanksgiving Day

November 23, 2023

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

Amidst the horrific violence and destruction of the American Civil War in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation establishing Thanksgiving Day as a national holiday. In so doing, Lincoln echoed the sentiments of Saint Paul expressed in his Epistle to the Philippians. President Lincoln called on the nation to return God to His proper and central place in the life of our nation, to restore the covenantal nature of our nation's founding in peace that had been reduced to merely a social contract among self-interested parties. He called on Americans wounded by civil war and slavery and longing for peace to belong first to God, secondly to humanity, and thirdly to belong to the United States of America with a sense of peace only fostered through gratitude and repentance for sins.

This Thanksgiving, as we find ourselves anxious about a world at war in Ukraine and the Holy Land, let us surrender our anxiety to God through our expression of gratitude for His gift of life, His gift of love, and His gift of peace, that He might guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. In our thanksgiving for God's many blessings, may we receive God's gift of peace in our world, in our nation, in our community, and in our families. I pray that Almighty God might grant you and your family His peace, the peace that the world cannot give, and the peace which is the center of His Son's Kingdom to which we are blessed to belong.

+ Michael F. Olson

Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, STD, MA
Bishop of Fort Worth

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