



LEARN PRAY ACT

Sponsored by Sisters of Charity of NY and Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth NJ

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LEARN: Thanksgiving is more than a meal; it's a lesson in dependence on gifts we do not make. Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* deepens that insight with "integral ecology," the idea that environmental, social, and spiritual health rise or fall together.

When we name food as gift – soil, sun, pollinators, farmers, drivers, grocers – we trade self-sufficiency for humility and resist the "throwaway culture" the encyclical critiques.

The holiday's Christian resonance matters too: "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving." If creation is a sacrament of communion, gratitude must show up in habits – less waste, more local and just sourcing, a simpler lifestyle measured by generosity.

A truthful Thanksgiving also remembers contested histories. For Indigenous Peoples, the day evokes loss; *Laudato Si'* urges listening to indigenous wisdom about reciprocity with the land. Gratitude that remembers becomes a commitment to repair.

Practically, we can bless the meal by naming land and labor, planning portions to cut waste, choosing foods that honor ecosystems and fair wages, invite someone who would eat alone, and share our abundance. These small choices rehearse a larger pattern – in energy use, purchasing, and civic life – where praise and responsibility belong together. Celebrated this way, Thanksgiving doesn't end at the table; it matures into a steady, joyful care for our common home.

PRAY: For each new morning with its light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food,
For love and friends,
For everything thy goodness sends. – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

ACT: Incorporate gratitude into your daily life:

- Take a moment to reflect on fond memories.
- Incorporate saying what you are thankful for at mealtime or bedtime.
- Thank someone for their kindness through words or a written note and pray for that person.