November 21

Happy Monday, DGCC Family.

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever” (1 Chronicles 16:34).

This week we will celebrate the holiday we call Thanksgiving. Traditionally, it is a day we set aside to reflect and thank God for the many blessings He has given us. Unfortunately, in modern times, the day seems to have taken on a more secular meaning that focuses on overeating and football.

In any case, with your permission, I would like to focus this week on some personal reflections regarding things for which I am deeply thankful. Those things certainly include a loving and supportive wife of over 36 years, loving and responsible children who love and serve the Lord, a warm house, food to eat, and a calling as a pastor that is genuinely fulfilling.

However, what I would like to focus on this week is my thankfulness for all that you, our DGCC family, give to support our mission, which is to be “the hands and feet of Jesus in the community.” Your giving touches so many lives you have never seen, so this week I would like to introduce you to a few of them.

This man’s name is Eduardo. The shopping cart you see in front of him contains all of his worldly belongings. No need for an extra closet, or perhaps a storage unit. He carries all of his possessions to wherever he lays his head at night, which is usually on the streets. On this day, I met him at 18th and Loomis in the city and gave him a warm meal and a sandwich with food donated by you and made by those who serve in our Manna Ministry. We also served him the Sacrament of Communion on this day. The grocery bag he is accepting contains warm socks and underwear donated by some of you.
So at least for this day, Eduardo’s soul was warmed by the body of Christ and his body was warmed by the soul of Downers Grove Community Church; your caring, your love, and your gifts.

On this day, from me to you: Thanks for giving.

Tomorrow: Guadalupe and her granddaughter.

IHS,

Pastor Lou

November 22
Grace and peace to you this day.

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

The same day I met Eduardo, who I talked a bit about yesterday, I met Guadalupe and her granddaughter.

A you can see, Guadalupe walks with a cane, and getting around is difficult for her, especially on that day, which was a bit cool and quite breezy. Nonetheless, she stood patiently in line, took the Communion wafer I offered her, made the sign of the cross as she quietly said, “Muchas gracias Jesus Christo.” I’m pretty sure Jesus understood her whispered Spanish.

As she said that and her granddaughter looked on (by the way, is she as cute as a bug or what?), I couldn’t help but think how those who have little are quick to give thanks to God. They seem to take nothing for granted and are grateful to be able to stand in line,
receive a hot meal, a blessing, Communion, and “muchas gracias” to their Savior, Jesus Christo.

As always, all of this is only possible because of your ongoing generosity. So again today, from me to you: Thanks for giving.

Tomorrow: Tent city.

IHS,

Pastor Lou

November 23

Greetings to you this day in the name of Jesus.

“I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD Most High” (Psalms 7:17).

About 40 or so minutes from DGCC is a city within the City. And even though it is less than an hour away, it is seemingly a world away, and a world apart. I am not talking about some trendy neighborhood with chic restaurants and stylish people. Nor am I talking about a neighborhood where the City or business leaders visit looking for votes or investment dollars. Instead, I am talking about a city of dirty tents, forgotten people, and a short supply of hope. It looks like this:

On the day we went there to hand out meals, offer prayer, and try to provide some basic human dignity, most of the residents of this city were out “working,” meaning they were out at the various street corners hustling motorists and passersby for any spare change they might offer. I did, however, chat briefly with one man who did not (or would not)
offer his name. He was wary of me at first because, as he told me, he thought I might be a “cop.” I assured him I wasn't, and offered him a hot meal, a sandwich, and a bottle of water. When he asked me for a second meal (we always seem to have enough – go figure), he was quick to tell me that it wasn’t for him, but for his friend in the orange tent who was sick and couldn’t come out and get his own. Charity indeed begins at home, which in this case is an orange tent pitched next to Cermak Avenue under the Dan Ryan expressway.

Once again, all this is made possible because of the donations from all of you. So, from me to you: thanks for giving.

Tomorrow: Thank you, God.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

November 24

Happy Thanksgiving!

Rather than a written devotional today, I thought I would share one of my favorite Thanksgiving videos that you can share with your family, perhaps as a devotional, or at least before you turn on the football game.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPGFHqKbEjc

From Judy and me, Thanksgiving blessings to all of you today and every day.

IHS,
Pastor Lou

November 25

Happy Friday, everyone!

Here's your musical devotion for the week. Turn up the volume and enjoy!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s99dNPKYtHk

IHS,
Pastor Lou