

November Five Ways E-Letter

November 16, 2022

First, may we each have a joyful and Happy Thanksgiving. Let us remember that this celebration of a successful harvest, begun in 1621 by the Pilgrims and Native Americans in Plymouth, MA, was soon joined by the nearby Puritans and quickly spread to all the original thirteen English speaking colonies. But in Florida, Spanish settlers in what became St. Augustine, celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving on Sept. 8, 1565, and in Texas, in Palo Duro Canyon, May 29, 1541, Spanish explorers and Native Americans held a Thanksgiving Mass. So our earliest Thanksgivings were also Eucharistic.

In Georgetown, MA, we will be participating in an ecumenical Thanksgiving service at 7 pm on Nov. 22 at the First Congregational Church, which some newly arrived Muslims may attend. So the tradition of Thanksgiving including all who reside in the USA, continues. May all be welcome.

Secondly, when Pope Francis visited Bahrain Nov. 3-6, he forcefully spoke for "recognition of women in the public square" in his Nov. 4 address "Closing the 'Bahrain Forum for Dialogue'." Later the same day, in his "Ecumenical Meeting and Prayer for Peace," with "dear brother Bartholomew" (the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople) at his side, he explained again why Christian Unity is indispensable for Evangelization. "Sadly, by our divisions, we have wounded the Lord's holy body, yet the Holy Spirit, who joins all the members together, is greater than our divisions according to the flesh. Consequently it is right to say that what unites us far exceeds what divides us and that, the more we journey according to the Spirit, the more we will be led to desire and, with the help of God, restore full unity among us."

After describing that we must have both unity and diversity among Christians, he continued: "It will also do us good to take a look at the way we bear witness, since with the passage of time we can weaken in our enthusiasm for reflecting Jesus through the spirit of the Beatitudes, the consistency and goodness of our lives, and our peaceful

conduct. . . . Unity and witness are both essential." Both documents may be found on the Vatican website: www.vatican.va, type in the title of the document.

Thirdly, Pope Francis has added another year to the process of synodality. Some parishes and dioceses have had excellent results, others very little. So this uneven result means more time and energy on declericalizing the Church. See www.harrywinter.org, home page.

Many thanks to those who responded to the Oct. 18 e-letter. Our new Oblate general administration has not yet finalized its statement "Pilgrims of Hope in Communion." There will be a section on lay members of the Oblate Family. I will include that in a Five Ways monthly e-letter when the text is complete.

Gratefully in Christ,

Fr. Harry Winter, O.M.I.