



# *The St. Paul's Spirit*

Pottstown, Pennsylvania

October 2017

## ***GIVING THANKS***

Dear Saint Paul's Friends,

When my son was a little boy, I remember reading to him Richard Scarry's book for children, *The Please and Thank You Book*. I still have that book. It's a good reminder that no matter how old we are, it's always important to say those "magic words" – Please and Thank You.

For example, at the dinner table we generally say, "Please pass the potatoes," rather than, "Hey, give me the potatoes." And thank you. It's always good to say thank you. Thank you for the nice socks (which you'll never wear, but you say "thank you" anyway). And thank you for your visit. Thank you for caring. Thank you for your time. It's important to say "thank you."

So at Thanksgiving, gathered around the table piled high with all the ingredients of a great Thanksgiving feast, my family had a tradition for our meal prayer. We would each say one thing for which we were thankful. I'm thinking your family might have a similar tradition. I remember giving thanks for my new baseball glove. My sister said thank you for her Barbie doll. My other sister gave thanks that she didn't have to sit next to Aunt Myrtle (that didn't over very well). But by and large, the youngsters at the table offered thanks for "stuff," for "things," things you can feel and touch. I suppose that's natural. The adults at the table were more likely to say thank you for our family, for friendship, for memories, for the fact that we were there, together.

I believe the older we are, the more life experience we have behind us, the more we are apt to be thankful for the very precious things in life that we can't touch or put our hands on or even see. Our thinking may be more abstract. More importantly, over the years we have come to appreciate the value of the wonderful things we receive that are unseen.

Take for example, love. You can't see love. But we can see evidence of it. I remember asking a vacation Bible school class to make a poster that showed love. When the posters were done, one little girl had cut out pictures and pasted them on cardboard: a picture of a boy hugging a dog, a picture of a baby being held, a picture of a child helping another child climb a pile of rocks, an adult couple embracing, and so on. I said to Allie: "Allie, that's very nice. That's a great poster. Now, can you tell me what love is?" She thought and thought; you could see the wheels turning. "No," she replied. "I haven't had it yet." It sounded as though she compared love with chicken pox.

Indeed, it is difficult to describe love, exactly. We do not see it. We see evidence of it. A mom, as she places a bandage on a scraped knee. A couple standing at the marriage altar. A dad with a tear in his eye after giving his daughter away. Love. What a beautiful blessing. We do not see it. We see evidences of it. We experience it. Reason enough to be thankful. Thank God for love.

And the unseen force that is around that Thanksgiving table. You and I know there is more to be thankful for than turkey and potatoes and gravy and dressing and fancy place settings. Everybody is thankful, though they may not think to speak of it – thankful for affection. The affection that helps to hold the family together. The care and concern family members have for one another. It's what can turn a house into a home.

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