

When it comes to “Charlie Brown” or “Peanuts” specials, I suppose you could call me a ‘purist.’ By the time I was in Kindergarten, anything from the series that was new, was suspect.

So, when “A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving” came out in 1973, I wasn’t sold. After all, I was eleven by then. And nothing could compete with the ‘classics.’

In the show, Peppermint Patty surprises Charlie Brown with a phone call inviting herself over for Thanksgiving. She calls back two more times, each time inviting someone else.

Realizing this conflicts with his family trip to his grandmother’s, Charlie Brown resolves with the help of Linus, Snoopy, and Woodstock to do his best to put together an impromptu meal.

His signature dish is buttered toast, and to this feast he adds popcorn, jellybeans, pretzel sticks, and ice cream sundaes.

When the guests arrive, Peppermint Patty takes him to task saying,  
*What blockhead cooked all this?*

Awkwardly, Peppermint Patty’s imposition reflects an early form of what we would call today “*entitlement.*” It takes her friend Marcie to explain to her that it’s a bit odd to invite yourself over, bring extra guests, and then demand that things be just the way you want.

Of course, after 24 minutes, everything is resolved with three brief lines wrapping everything up:

*Thanksgiving is more than eating.*

*We should just be thankful for being together.*

*There’s enough problems in the world ... without these stupid misunderstandings.*

I personally remain a purist. After all, what can compare with Linus reciting from memory the nativity from Luke’s Gospel.

It seems to me that the writers in 1973 were struggling to see just what someone should be thankful for.

Considering that the Source and Summit of the Christian life is the Eucharist - we should be somewhat familiar with the meaning of the Greek word *eukharistos* which means 'to give thanks.'

There are many layers to this theologically, and we could exhaust the rest of the evening going through them. But it is very important for us as Christians to make "giving thanks" ... "being grateful" ... "thanksgiving" ... "eucharist" ... or all of them, or any combination of them ... the Source and Summit of our Christian life.

As we approach this altar to receive ... the Most Holy Eucharist ... Jesus Christ ... Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity ... let us pray for the grace to be immersed in the gratitude for all the gifts that God has bestowed on us ... and will bestow on us in the future. Let us set aside any thoughts or spirit of entitlement, and recognize that God gives us what we need ... and give thanks.

On behalf of everyone at Holy Family - myself, Deacon Roger, staff, volunteers ... may you have a blessed and happy Thanksgiving.