

# A Thanksgiving Prayer



Gracious and loving God,  
On this day of gratitude, we gather with thankful hearts.  
We give thanks for the richness of our diverse human family –  
for immigrants, migrants, and refugees whose journeys, courage,  
and hope remind us of the resilience of the human spirit.  
Their stories deepen our understanding of welcome,  
and their presence enriches our communities.

We pray today for peace in our world— for an end to violence, hatred and division.  
May Your spirit of compassion guide all nations toward justice, understanding, and harmony.

We lift up those without a place to call home. Grant shelter to the unhoused and strength to  
those working to provide them with safety and belonging. May every person find warmth,  
dignity and a genuine welcome.

We give thanks for the blessings before us – for the food that sustains us,  
for the hands that prepared it and for the love that surrounds us.

Bless our gatherings, bless those we love near and far, and bless our shared human family  
and the earth in which we dwell. May gratitude shape our actions and hope light our paths.

Amen.

# We Give Thanks

**Thanksgiving** is a national holiday in the United States, celebrated each year on the fourth Thursday of November. It is one of the nation's most significant cultural holidays, centered around **gratitude, family gatherings, and traditional foods**.

The origins of Thanksgiving are commonly traced to 1621, when English settlers known as Pilgrims held a harvest feast in Plymouth (in present-day Massachusetts). They shared this meal with members of the Wampanoag Indian Nation, who had helped them survive their first year by teaching them local agriculture and food-gathering techniques.



The event was not called “Thanksgiving” at the time, nor was it the first example of such a gathering, but it later became a symbol of cooperation and gratitude. The modern holiday took shape in the 19th century, and in 1863, during the U.S. Civil War, President Abraham

Lincoln proclaimed a national Thanksgiving Day to foster unity and gratitude.

Today, historians emphasize a fuller and more complex view of the interactions between European settlers and Native peoples, acknowledging both the cooperation and the difficulties that followed.

For many Americans, Thanksgiving is primarily about gratitude, togetherness, and generosity. For others—especially many Native American communities—the day is also a time of remembrance and reflection.

It is a time to give thanks for blessings received and to foster a mindfulness of the needs of others.

## Closing Ceremony – “Centro Chispa Modificado” Program

The Dispensario San José in Guatemala recently celebrated a meaningful milestone: the closing ceremony of the Centro Chispa Modificado program, 2025 cycle. The event was filled with joy, creativity, and a spirit of hope as the children who participated throughout the year shared how much they have grown—not only in skills, but also in confidence, awareness, and collaboration.

The ceremony began with a warm welcome from our coordinator, Sister Concepción, who reminded everyone that Chispa is a space where children are encouraged to explore, learn, and discover their potential. Her invitation for more families to join the

program felt especially significant as we witnessed the enthusiasm and openness of the children.

Throughout the morning, the participants offered moments that touched all of us deeply. Through games, shared laughter, and simple interactions, they created an atmosphere of closeness and unity. Their presence highlighted the importance of community programs that support, guide, and



Look at all these smiles and happy children at the closing ceremony celebrating their joy, learning and creativity.

One of the most moving moments was the presentation about children’s rights. Through dance and song, the children expressed—gently yet firmly—the importance of respect, protection, and opportunities for every child to grow in a safe and healthy environment.

Their creativity shone once again during the play “The Great Battle Inside Carlitos’ Body.” With imagination and charm, the children portrayed a story that taught the community about the responsible use of antibiotics and the importance of caring for one’s health. It was a memorable performance that combined learning, fun, and community awareness.



To close the event, the children performed a dance inviting everyone to reflect on peace, empathy, and the need to build environments free from violence. Their message, simple yet powerful, reminded us that children carry wisdom and that their voices deserve to be heard.

The ceremony concluded with the awarding of diplomas and special recognition for the children who showed dedication and perseverance throughout the year. With applause, smiles, and a shared snack, we celebrated the end of a cycle that leaves a lasting impact on each child, their families, and our community.

*~ submitted by Vanessa Duenas, Comunicacion Cabrini, Guatemala*



## Pope Leo XIV on Immigration

Pope Leo XIV's recent words affirming the dignity of immigrants have offered a powerful moral reminder to people in all nations. Echoing long-standing Catholic social teaching, he underscores that every migrant and refugee possesses an inherent, God-given worth that must be respected regardless of legal status or country of origin.

His support for the recent statement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) reinforces this message. By endorsing the USCCB's call for immigrants to be treated humanely and with dignity and respect, the Holy Father highlights the Church's commitment to protecting vulnerable people and promoting policies rooted in compassion, justice, and the common good.



These statements urge all people – Catholics and non-Catholics – to recognize immigrants as neighbors and to respond with empathy, solidarity and a renewed dedication to building a society where everyone can live in safety and hope.

To access some relevant articles of interest, please click [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#)

# A Well-Deserved Recognition!

Sandi Schreier, Director of Social Work at Cabrini of Westchester, was presented with the 2026 Professional of the Year Award from LeadingAge New York, part of a national association of 5,500 not-for-profit organizations. Ms. Schreier graciously accepted the award from Kristen Meyers, Chief Operating Officer of LeadingAge New York, on November 13, 2025 at a celebration held in her honor. While presenting the award, Ms. Meyers stated “This award honors a long-term care, housing and services professional for their contributions to the well-being of the elderly or chronically ill in his or her community. It is open to professionals who demonstrate civic involvement as well as professional dedication, accomplishment and field expertise. I’m very pleased to present this award to Sandi on behalf of

LeadingAge New York.”



From left: Kristen Meyers, Chief Operating Officer of LeadingAge New York; Bonita Burke, Chief Operating Officer and Administrator, Cabrini of Westchester; Sr. Arlene Van Dusen, MSC, Cabrini of Westchester Trustee; Sandi Schreier, Director of Social Work, Cabrini of Westchester; and Sr. Catherine Garry, MSC, Cabrini of Westchester Trustee.

Ms. Meyers shared that the nomination included comments from several of Ms. Schreier’s peers and truly got to the heart of why she is such a deserving recipient of this award. In his nomination letter, Fr. Ronald Galt, Vice President of

Mission and Pastoral Care wrote: “she is without a doubt one of the most dedicated, hardworking and accomplished leaders I have had the pleasure to work with in my career. She is deeply respected and admired by her fellow department leaders, her own staff, as well as other interdisciplinary staff, our volunteers and our residents.”

Another peer, David Leyden, Director of Rehabilitation, wrote, “I am blessed to have a colleague who not only supports and encourages me, but also challenges me in a way that makes me see things from a different perspective.”

At the reception, Bonita Burke, Chief Executive Officer and Administrator stated, “Sandi, you are someone who truly knows compassion, integrity and dedication and this award could not have gone to a better person.” ***Congratulations Sandi!***

~ submitted by Susan Herveg, Director of Development and PR, Cabrini of Westchester

# Multi-day Celebrations Mark the Feast Day at NY Shrine

What a week! St. Frances Cabrini Shrine in New York hosted seven Feast celebrations over four days.

On November 13th we greeted youth from four Catholic schools and in the evening held the Canonization Concert, a re-creation of the Gregorian chant and other music used at Mother Cabrini's canonization ceremony.



The Filipino Mass drew many pilgrims.



Mother Cabrini's Feast Day will always be memorable for Nick and Jenny who became engaged at the Shrine following the Italian Mass.

Societies in the United States, celebrated. His tremendously inspiring homily can be heard [here](#).

As the English Mass ended a busload of Ugandans arrived from Massachusetts. Warm smiles, beautiful harmonies, and huge pots of food lit up the afternoon. While they were finishing their meal in the retreat room a joyous Mass in Spanish began in the chapel, celebrated by Bishop Edmund Whalen.

All in all it was a spectacular few days.

Blessings to all!

*~ submitted by Julia Attaway, Executive Director, St. F.X. Cabrini Shrine, NYC*

Saturday included Mass in Italian (with a surprise marriage proposal afterwards!) and a Mass for the Filipino community. Sunday dawned with beautiful weather and a full chapel for the English Mass. Msgr. Roger Landry, the National Director of the Pontifical Mission



Ugandans traveled from Massachusetts to celebrate the Feast Day.



# Villanova U. Sponsors Walk for Migrants and Pilgrims of Hope: Augustine, Cabrini and the Journey of the Migrant *The Cabrini University Community Takes Part*



Dr. Ray Ward (c.) kicks off the Solidarity Walk with a prayer.

On the Feast Day of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, Patroness of Immigrants, - which is also the birthday of St. Augustine - members of Cabrini University joined the Villanova University community in a Solidarity

Walk to show support for migrants. The walk was sponsored by Villanova's Mission and Ministry Office.



Sr. Christine Marie Baltas, MSC presented highlights of Mother Cabrini's life.

The walk wound its way through the Villanova campus and finished at the Villanova Law School where an immigration panel entitled "*Pilgrims of Hope: Augustine, Cabrini and the Journey of the Migrant*" took place.

Co-sponsored by the Augustinian Institute and the Mother Cabrini Institute on Immigration with welcoming remarks by Institute faculty director Michele Pistone, Sr. Christine Marie Baltas, MSC, served as

one of the panelists sharing insights on Mother Cabrini's life and her outreach to immigrants.

Additionally, U.S. Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon, (D.) of the 5<sup>th</sup> District



Faculty, staff and alumni from Cabrini University attended the panel discussion hosted by Michele Pistone, (front r.) who is the faculty director of the Mother Cabrini Institute on Immigration.



of Pennsylvania, provided an update on legislation regarding immigrants, migrants and refugees.

As of next academic year, the offices of the Mother Cabrini Institute on Immigration will be based on the Villanova University – Cabrini campus in Radnor, Pennsylvania.

U.S. Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon offered opening remarks at the forum.

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## Cabrini of Westchester Honors its Long-Term Service Employees



Sherlyn Baptiste, CNA, receives her forty-five year pin! Congratulations!

On November 14th, Cabrini of Westchester held the annual Employee Service Awards ceremony followed by a luncheon in honor of forty-four outstanding employees who were celebrating five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five and even forty-five years of service to the organization.

The ceremony was held in St. Cabrini's Chapel and Christina Tiesi, Pastoral Care Associate, bestowed blessings on all of the honorees. In her remarks, Bonnie Burke, Chief Executive Officer and Administrator, said, "Our mission is rooted in compassion, care, and community, and today we recognize the vital contribution of our staff across all departments. Every member of our

team plays a crucial role in enhancing the lives of the residents. Your commitment ensures the residents receive the highest level of care and dignity. A heartfelt thank you to each of you for your years of service, unwavering commitment, professionalism, kindness and love you put into your work throughout the years. I extend full gratitude to all of you and congratulations!"

Each of the awardees received a pin with a precious stone reflective of their years of service to Cabrini of Westchester. *Account continues on following page.*



Recipients were invited to participate in a luncheon in recognition of the hard work and dedication to the mission accomplished by all Cabrini of Westchester Employees each and every day of the year!

**CABRINI**  
— OF WESTCHESTER —



Congratulations to Thirty-five year recipients, Patricia Cooper, Unit Clerk, Robin Sampogna, Rehabilitation Secretary, and John Iavarone, Watch Engineer.

*~ submitted by Susan Herceg, Director of Development and Public Relations, Cabrini of Westchester*

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## **CHS Honors Katrina-Displaced Students with Long-Awaited Commencement**



Nearly twenty years after Hurricane Katrina disrupted their education and scattered the Cabrini High School New Orleans community across the country, a group of former Crescents finally experienced the moment they had long been denied. On Thursday, November 13, 2025, the Feast Day of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, Cabrini High School welcomed back alumnae from the Classes of 2006, 2007, and 2008 for a special honorary commencement ceremony.

The day began with Mass at Our Lady of the Rosary Church where honorees gathered with classmates, families, and faculty members who had supported them through the storm's

aftermath. Afterward, the celebration continued on campus with a reception recognizing the honorees' perseverance and their place within Cabrini's lifelong sisterhood. *Account continues on following page.*

Each woman crossed the stage carrying Cabrini's signature yellow rose, a symbol of unity, resilience, and the unbroken bond shared by generations of Crescents, the same rose carried at all Cabrini High School graduations. Each Crescent received an honorary diploma, a Mother Cabrini rosary, and an official welcome into the alumnae association, bringing long-awaited closure to a chapter interrupted nearly two decades ago.

"This ceremony was more than a graduation; it was a homecoming," said Deacon Uriel Durr, President of Cabrini High School. "These women's perseverance and faith embody what it means to be a Crescent."

Director of Communications and Alumnae Affairs Anne Argus DiPaola, Class of 1996, reflected on the significance of the day. "Every yellow rose carried down the aisle symbolized not just a true Cabrinian woman, but a bond that was never broken. Cabrini has always been their home."



The honorees included Dr. Alane J. Anthony '06, Amber Christine Clay '06, Lauren Easterling '08, Angelle Charlet Goodwyne '08, Jessica Lucas Higginbotham '06, Monique Hagan '07, Candice McGee '06, Stacey Windon Matthews '07, Bethany Alaina Miles '07, and Erica Gaines Moore '06.

The celebration served as a powerful reminder that even twenty years after Katrina, the Cabrini spirit remains strong, rooted in faith, strengthened by friendship, and carried proudly into the future by its alumnae.

*~ submitted by Anne Argus DiPaola, '96, Cabrini High School Director of Communications*

## So Much for Which to be Thankful

During this time of giving thanks, Cabrini Immigrant Services -Dobbs Ferry, NY (CIS-DF), is thrilled to announce that we have a new US citizen. Dara Mersi Martinez passed her US Citizenship exam! She came to the United States in 2011 from Guatemala. Dara is filled with gratitude for all the help she received from her tutors at CIS-DF.

A special thank you to Peter Ricca, one of her tutors, who helped Dara learn the many questions needed to pass the test.

**Congratulations Dara!**

*~ submitted by Lorraine Campanelli, Director, CIS-DF*



A new US citizen.

# Thanksgiving with an International Flair!

The Knitting Group at Cabrini Immigrant Services – Dobbs Ferry (CIS-DF), held a special Thanksgiving luncheon. The group wanted to celebrate all the blessings that they had and continue to receive.



A CIS-DF client offers grace before the Thanksgiving meal.

The meal started with a special prayer given by one of the clients. In addition to thanking God for the gifts of faith, friendship and family, she also thanked God for the gift of CIS-DF and the staff. A Thanksgiving meal followed the prayer. Special recipes were prepared with a flavor from the different countries. Everyone was so proud to bring in dishes from Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico.

Lorraine Campanelli, the Director, told the members of the Knitting Group that they too

are a blessing to CIS-DF. She told them of the good that they do for so many people through their special projects. It was a blessing that we could all be together, celebrate and be thankful.



CIS-DF celebrants from many nations brought their favorite native dishes to share, reminiscent of the first Thanksgiving.



*~ submitted by Lorraine Campanelli, Director, CIS-DF*

## **The Update – Upcoming Publication Schedule**

Due to scheduling in the Province Communications Office, next month, The Update will be published on Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup> only. Publication will resume on Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Please take note when planning your news submissions. Prayer requests are always welcome and will be published on Thursdays as they are received.



## Getting Ready for Christmas as a Community

Each year, the season of Advent awakens in our community a spirit of preparation, reflection, and joyful creativity. 2025 has been no exception. Since the first days of November, **Dispensario Madre Cabrini** has been committed to guiding families through educational and communal experiences that nurture connection, learning, and the warm anticipation of Christmas.



Youngsters in our Christmas Course proudly showcase their creations, celebrating the joy, teamwork, and creativity that mark the beginning of our holiday preparations.

decorated Christmas; in the second class, they built chocolate houses—an activity that filled the room with collaboration, excitement, and a sense of accomplishment. Although the course has only just begun, it is already leaving a meaningful impact on those who attend, reminding us that Christmas is also built through shared experiences and simple acts of care.

At the same time, our Vacation School has completed two vibrant and colorful weeks. The children have created a variety of Christmas crafts: decorative trees, nativity capsules, ornaments, and other handmade pieces that reflect the wonder of childhood. Each activity strengthens their creativity, motor skills, and ability to interact with others through respect, imagination, and joy.

Together, these two initiatives—one for adults and youth, the other for children—illustrate the profound meaning of preparing for Christmas as a community. Seeing so many people learn, create, and share reinforces our mission to accompany processes that transform lives in simple, everyday ways. At Cabrini Guatemala, we continue to

One of these efforts is our Christmas Course, which began with enthusiasm. Both youth and adults joined with the desire to learn new culinary skills that, beyond technique, encourage teamwork, patience, and the joy of sharing.

During the first session, participants baked and



Making chocolate houses requires skill and

light small, early sparks of Christmas: gestures of faith, unity, and service that announce the hope of the season. ~ submitted by Vanessa Duenas, Comunicacion Cabrini, Guatemala

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*The season of Advent begins on Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. We are delighted to share that this Advent, once again, the Cabrini Lay Missionaries (CLM) will be gracing us with their reflections. The reflection for the First Sunday in Advent is by Lorraine Campanelli.*

## The Season of Advent



### 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent

The First Week of Advent represents Hope. We begin the time of anticipation, the time of Christ's coming into the world. In the second reading at Mass for the First Sunday of Advent (Romans 13:11-14), we are told that the hour has come for us to awaken from our sleep.

I can only speak for myself, but I don't get a lot of sleep. It is so hard for me to quiet my mind. Our world is in chaos. People are struggling financially, health-wise, and so many other ways. Sometimes I ask myself, "Do I really want to be awake to see what is going on around me?" Yet, as we continue in Romans, we are told to 'throw off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.' As I reflected on that line, I felt overwhelmed. How can I put on light when we are surrounded by so much darkness?

As I prayed, I received an answer. I heard the Lord say to me, "If everyone who follows me put on Jesus Christ, the armor of light, the light of the world, imagine how much light would be seen through the darkness."

My prayer for this first week of Advent will be, "Lord, help me to be Your light. In order to do that, I must awaken my soul and my heart to You." As we are told in Sunday's Gospel, (Matthew 24:37-44), 'Therefore, stay awake!' My heart is filled with hope! ~ Lorraine Campanelli, Director, Cabrini Lay Missionaries

# Prayer Requests

## *Jim Collins*

Please pray for Jim Collins, the husband of Cabrini College alumna Elizabeth McNerlin Collins '71. Jim is currently hospitalized and doctors are trying to pinpoint a diagnosis and an effective medical treatment plan for him. Please pray for Liz, too, as she accompanies Jim throughout his illness.

## With Grateful Hearts this Thanksgiving

A Grace Before Meals

Lord God,  
Our hearts are filled with gratitude  
as we celebrate the feast of Thanksgiving.  
We have come to this our table  
with joy and fellowship,  
for we are truly grateful to you, our God,  
for all that we have been given.  
We pause now and, in silent prayer,  
to thank you for the great generosity of Your gifts.

The Missionary Sisters wish everyone a blessed, safe, and Happy Thanksgiving!

