

## Thanksgiving Interfaith Service – November 26, 2024

### Invocation:

Dear friends,

On this blessed Thanksgiving, I welcome you with joy and gratitude to the heart of our city, San Fernando Cathedral. Today, we gather not as individuals of different traditions, but as one community, united by a spirit of gratitude.

Pope Francis tells the story of an old woman who once said to him in Buenos Aires: *“gratitude is a flower that grows on a noble ground.”* He goes on to say: *“Nobility of soul is necessary so that this flower might grow.”* It is in this shared spirit of nobility that we reflect on the blessings we have received, even amidst challenges and uncertainties. The trials of the past year have reminded us of the enduring power of kindness, compassion, and hope. Let us give thanks for the strength to persevere, the grace to support one another, and the abundance of love that binds us as neighbors and friends.

This Cathedral, a symbol of faith and unity for generations, calls us to be stewards of gratitude and harmony. In gratitude, we are called not just to receive, but to give – to extend a hand to the lonely, a meal to the hungry, and hope to the weary. Let us remember that each act of generosity reflects the divine love that sustains us all.

Let us pray,

O God, source of every blessing, we come before You with hearts full of thanks. We ask that You open our hearts to one another, inspiring us to share Your gifts with those in need. May this Thanksgiving celebration renew our commitment to justice, compassion, and unity, so that our city may shine as a beacon of Your love. Amen.

**Benediction:**

**Friends, may your Thanksgiving be filled with joy, gratitude, and peace. Thank you for joining us in this sacred gathering. From my Catholic tradition, I offer you this blessing, which is rooted in the same Scripture shared by Christians and Jews:**

**May the Lord bless you and keep you,**

**May the Lord shine His face upon you and be gracious to you,**

**May the Lord look upon you with kindness and grant you peace.**

**And may Almighty God bless you: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**