

St Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church
Thanksgiving Day
November 25, 2021

We give thee humble and hearty thanks for this thy bounty.

Have you noticed that what were the common courtesies

Please and Thank You

Are almost unknown among our youth?

I am afraid I have joined the rabble and do not exercise the

Courtesy drilled into me by my Mother

At every occasion where I should

But the greater sin is this:

When we fail to recognize the gifts of God

The dawn of a fresh new day

The leaf on a tree

The flowers in the field

The clear blue sky

The night stars that we take for granted

Wouldn't we appreciate them the more

if they were visible only one night each year?

Even our Moon beautiful in the night sky

We notice only when there is not some disaster or crime to
fill the air time

and the media resorted to the astronomical fact

that the Moon was closer to us so seeming larger than usual.

We dishonor God when

we fail to see Him in the smile of a baby

Or on the face of a stranger

We can be ungrateful sods

when some aspect of our lives goes unexpectedly well
And we fail to see His Hand in it.

When we are the beneficiary of an act of kindness

A car stops so that you may safely walk across the street

A stranger holds a door for you

The person in the grocery line lets you go ahead of her
because you have only a single purchase.

And we are blind to God's hand in our lives.

Please and thank you. Even to God. Especially to God.

It must be human nature to become numbed to His role in our lives
The Children of God wandering in the dessert were fed every day
by the Hand of God

They were freed from bondage after 413 years,

They escaped the chariots of Pharaoh, death and capture as the
Red Sea parted

They were led every day and guarded every night by a pillar of fire

Yet they not only took it all for granted

They complained and rebelled

Do we do the same on occasion?

Sometimes it is a matter of the right perspective. We need to
maintain perspective.

One young woman wrote home from her first year in college this
letter:

Dear Mom,

Sorry I have not written sooner. I broke my arm, actually I broke
my arm and my leg. It was because of the fire in the dorm. I guess
I haven't told you about that have I. Sorry. I had to jump from the

second floor to escape the flames. But I was lucky. A young man from the gas station down the street was on night shift, saw the fire, called 911 and came to help. The firemen got there right away. I was in the hospital only a few days, but Paul, the service station guy came to visit me every day. When I got out, the dorms were not ready for occupancy but Paul let me stay with him at his place. It was taking so long to get the dorms ready that I moved in with Paul. He's really nice. I must admit to you that I am pregnant and Paul and I plan to be married just as soon as he can get a divorce. I hope things are doing fine at home. I will write when I get the chance.

Love, Your Daughter Suzie.

P.S. None of the above is true. But I did get a "c" in sociology and flunked chemistry. I just wanted you to receive this in the "proper perspective".

One of the early acts of our first President George Washington
Was to adopt this proclamation:

"Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the
providence of Almighty God
to obey His will
to be grateful for His benefits
and humbly to implore His protection and favor , and

I recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next
To be devoted by the people of these United States
To the service of that great and glorious Being
Who is the beneficent Author
Of all the good
That was
That is

Or that will be . . . “

In the 88th year of the Independence of the United States, President Abraham Lincoln adopted this Thanksgiving Proclamation:

The year that is drawing towards its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To those bounties which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. . . .

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God. who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States . . . to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. . . .”

And so as our secular friends

Spend the day watching football
Gorging themselves tonight at their tables
Smashing themselves into the shopping malls in retail frenzy
And wonder what these silly Christians are doing on their
knees in church

Mr. President Washington and Mr. President Lincoln:

We have heard your words
Your proclamations
And we are here to offer thanks unto Almighty God

For what blessings do we offer thanks?

I must bow to the wife who answered;

For the little projects that my husband starts

and makes them big enough
 that the professionals must come in to make repairs
 For the children who put away their things
 and clean up after themselves
 they are such a joy
 you hate to see them go home to their own homes
 For teenagers because they teach their parents a second language
 Only true at my house when I am cooking the turkey
 For the smoke alarms that let you know when the turkey is
 done.

Or this list; quite a different one:
 For the taxes I pay—because it means I am employed
 For the clothes that fit a little snug—because it means I am fed
 For the lawn that needs mowing, the windows that need cleaning,
 The gutters that need emptying—because it means that I have
 A home
 For the huge heating bill—because it means I am warm

In our household the Thanksgiving meal comes with a price:
 By the rule of my good wife
 If they want something to eat.
 Everyone in turn must say the thing for which they offer
 Thanks to God
 The responses are sometimes what you would expect
 Of people firmly in the grip of our materialistic society
 But every now and then
 Especially from the grand kids
 There have been some insightful gems

But let me close
 with a story
 from the editorial pages of a small mid-western newspaper

on Thanksgiving Day several years ago;

It seems the first grade teacher of the grammar school
had the children, 6 and 7 years of age
draw a picture
of the most important thing
for which they wanted to give Thanks.

Now the school was in a poor neighborhood and she knew most of
them would draw pictures of turkeys,
tables laden with food.
Maybe a favorite toy or a friend.

But she was taken aback
by the picture that little Douglas drew.
A simple drawing
A childish drawing
Of a hand.
That was all
Just
A hand.

She held each picture up for the class, when she held up the hand
that Douglas had drawn
There was a question
Whose hand?
They were captivated by the rather abstract image.

Some kids thought it the hand of the woman that brought them food.

A farmer, said another, because he grows us turkeys.

Finally, when the kids were back to other tasks at their desks

The teacher bent down to Douglas and asked him about the hand he had drawn.

Whose hand was it Douglas?

At first the boy said nothing

And then he mumbled

At first she did not think she had heard him correctly

He very quietly said again:

“It’s your hand, Teacher”.

She realized that at recess she sometimes took the kids by the hand

But she recalled often doing so for Douglas

who was a scrubby forlorn little boy

The teacher began to ponder;

Perhaps this is everyone’s Thanksgiving

Not for the material things given to us

But for the chance

In whatever small way

To give to others,

God works with and through us

In ways that we too often do not even recognize.

Whose hand are you thankful for this Thanksgiving?

