

"THANKSGIVING DAY PROCLAMATION"

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THANKSGIVING SUNDAY MESSAGE

INTRODUCTION And suddenly it's Thanksgiving! - drawing us back to our roots, reminding us of who we are and what a strange and wonderful journey we have come. You don't have to be descended from that brave little crew that arrived on the Mayflower in 1620 in order to celebrate Thanksgiving. For a little while on Thursday, we'll all be Pilgrims again - feasting, toasting and marveling that the Lord has brought us through another year.

DEVELOPMENT When the first settlers gathered to offer their thanks to the God who had protected them on the edge of a vast wilderness, they established anew on American shores a Thanksgiving tradition as old as Westerman man himself.

From Moses at the Red Sea to Jesus preparing to feed the multitudes, the Scriptures summon us to words and deeds of gratitude, even before divine blessings are fully perceived.

From Washington kneeling at Valley Forge to the prayer of an astronaut circling the moon, our own history repeats that summons and proves its practicality.

Today, in an age of too much fashionable despair, the world more than ever needs to hear America's perennial harvest message,

"Take heart! Give thanks. To see clearly about us is to rejoice, and to rejoice is to worship the Father of us all; and to worship Him is to receive more blessings still."

Truly our cup runs over with the bounty of God - our lives, our liberties, and our loved ones; our worldly goods and our spiritual heritage; the beauty of our land, the breadth of our horizons, and the promise of peace that crowns it all. For all of this, let us give thanks.

SPIRIT OF SHARING Since 1621, the people of this country have gathered each year to celebrate with a feast their good fortune in their continuing ability to provide for families and friends.

As we approach Thanksgiving Day, we reaffirm again our faith in our heritage of freedom and our spirit of sharing.

While God has provided us with fertile lands and bountiful harvests, other nations and peoples have not been so favored. Each year growing food supplies give us greater cause for giving thanks, yet one person in six still suffers from chronic hunger and malnutrition. There are hungry and hurting people in our own land and in our own city. Some are to be found huddled in dark doorways and in the shadows of the buildings where you and I live.

We are called to practice "thankful giving" in our celebrations, remembering those who are hurting and hungry, remembering them in tangible ways.

This year, in the midst of plenty, we still face serious problems and massive challenges. In giving thanks for the many things we hold dear, let us also pray for the courage, the resourcefulness and sense of purpose we will need to continue America's saga of progress and to be worthy heirs of the Pilgrim spirit. May we, too, find the strength and vision to leave behind us a better world and an example that will inspire future generations to new achievements.

PROCLAMATIONS

Over the years I have made a practice of clipping and filing the various Presidential Thanksgiving Proclamations. Some, I feel, are quite good. But running through them all is a deep appreciation of the spiritual values that played a part in the founding of our country and a feeling that God has blessed this land and this people in wonderful ways.

We need to come back to this appreciation and this feeling. For us, it begins here.

Let me conclude this message by reading to you this year's Thanksgiving Presidential Proclamation. We shall follow it with a minute of quiet prayer and then join in singing what happens to be one of my favorite hymns of this Thanksgiving Season.

President's Proclamation

WASHINGTON, Nov. 10 (UPI) -- Following is the text of President Reagan's Thanksgiving Day proclamation:

The White House

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As we remember the faith and values that made America great, we should recall that our tradition of Thanksgiving is older than our nation itself. Indeed, the native American Thanksgiving antedated those of the new Americans. In the words of the eloquent Seneca traditions of the Iroquois, "Give it your thought, that with one mind we may now give thanks to Him our creator."

From the first Pilgrim observance in 1621 to the nine years before enduring the American Revolution when the Continental Congress declared days of fast and prayer and days of Thanksgiving, we have turned to almighty God to express our gratitude for the bounty and good fortune we enjoy as individuals and as a nation. America truly has been blessed.

This year we can be especially thankful that real gratitude to God is inscribed not in proclamation of government but in the hearts of all our people who come from every race, culture and creed on the face of the

Earth. And as we pause to give thanks for our many gifts, let us be tempered by humility and by compassion for those in need and let us reaffirm through prayer and action our determination to share our bounty with those less fortunate.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, in the spirit and tradition of the Iroquois, the Pilgrims, the Continental Congress and past Presidents, do hereby proclaim Thursday, Nov. 22, 1984, as a day of national Thanksgiving. I call upon every citizen of this great nation to gather together in homes and places of worship to celebrate, in the words of 1784, "with grateful hearts . . . the mercies and praises of their all bountiful Creator."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have here unto set my hand this 19th day of October in the year of our Lord 1984 and of the independence of the United States of America, 209th.

RONALD REAGAN