

Not Much Thanksgiving?

“We are entering the week of Thanksgiving. What a paradox!” someone said to me. “I read in the newspapers and hear and see on television about government gridlock, terrorism and how federal and state governments are slashing budgets and cutting services. And on top of that, look at the natural disasters our country has had this year – hurricanes, floods, tornadoes. Not much to be thankful for this year, huh?”

I’ve given considerable thought to that conversation. It reminds me of a cartoon I saw in a newspaper several years ago that illustrates a significant truth. The cartoon was arranged on four levels: on the top level was depicted a plainly dressed couple sitting at a table in a poorly furnished house with meager and ordinary food on the table. The room was lighted by an open wick. Both heads were bowed.



The second level of the cartoon pictured the couple, dressed in better clothes, with improved furnishings and more plentiful food in a room lighted by a candle. Their heads were partly bowed.

In the third scene, the food was arrayed in excellent fashion, clothes and surroundings were cozy and comfortable. The room was lighted by a kerosene lamp. Only the woman’s head was bowed.

The final sketch showed luxury in every detail of life, with blazing electric lights illuminating a table loaded with good things. Neither head was bowed.

Those pilgrims who celebrated the first Thanksgiving Day in what was to become the United States seemingly had little to be thankful for. Their numbers had been decimated by disease and death; their crops were not plentiful; enemies surrounded them; and another hard winter lay ahead. Yet, they joined in praise to God for the blessings He had bestowed upon them.

What are some blessings bestowed upon us today? There are many, but if we look around us, some of them gain instant attention:

1. **Be thankful for this country.** While it is not perfect, this nation is still the finest place in the world to live, where “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” The sacrifices of America’s sons and

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daughters to preserve our freedoms present us with a heritage that is rich and inspirational. America's natural resources are the envy of the world. But the resourcefulness of her people through God's providence holds the key to all of our nation's past, present and future accomplishments.

2. **Be thankful for family and friends.** The warm assurance of love and understanding among people is a settling influence in an unsettled world. Determine that you will endeavor to extend your circle of friendship, for there are many who are starving for that relationship.
3. **Be thankful for the food on your table.** In Asian, African and Latin American countries, well over 500 million people are living in what the World Bank has called "absolute poverty." The World Health Organization estimates that one-third of the world is well-fed, one-third is under-fed, and one-third is starving. Even in the U.S., one out of every eight children under the age of 12 goes to bed hungry every night.
4. **Be thankful for churches.** They extend the will and influence of God into all aspects of our lives, reminding us constantly of His goodness and mercy toward us.
5. **Be thankful for the mission** to which we are called in Life Care and Century Park. Being able to serve God's frail and infirm children produces special personal rewards, and lays up treasures in heaven.

A well-known song proclaims: "Come, ye thankful people, come." Thankful people seem to be thankful under all circumstances, and unthankful people find something about which to grumble, despite all blessings.

Wherever you may be this Thanksgiving, and whatever circumstances may be facing you, the advice of Holy Scripture is as true today as it was when written.

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!
(Psalm 107:1 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter