



Thanksgiving Day

The month of November is a time when autumn colors can still be seen as leaves fall to the ground in much of the United States. It is a time that anticipates that special holiday, Thanksgiving Day. It is a time when we celebrate our blessings in a land filled with promise and hope; and a time for Christian stewards to be reminded to give thanks to God, in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, always and for everything (Eph 5:20).

God is indeed a gracious and generous God, and we in the United States have experienced this loving generosity in a most unique way. The United States has been called the great "melting pot" of races, creeds and ethnicities; allowing people the freedom to practice their religion, speak their minds, and pursue economic opportunities. And like the universal communion of our Catholic faith, this melting pot is a mosaic of many colors and cultures, blended in one beautiful expression of unity with diversity.

Look on the back of any United States coin and you see the Latin phrase, *e pluribus unum*. This phrase is on the face of the Great Seal of the United States and it means "out of many, one." It expresses the same prophetic call to Communion we find numerous times in the New Testament.

In part, because of this unity in diversity, even with its foibles, America is still perceived around the world as a land of freedom for all and a beacon of hope in a world that is hungry for justice and peace.

This Thanksgiving, let us pray with a deep sense of gratitude that God continues to bless us abundantly and that we hear His urgent call to be even more fervent stewards of His blessings in America and throughout the world.

A Thanksgiving Quiz

Answers on Pg 2—Don't Peek!

1. Which President gave the first Thanksgiving Proclamation?
2. Which President established Thanksgiving as a legal holiday on the fourth Thursday of November?
3. What other country besides the USA celebrates Thanksgiving?
4. What department store sponsored the first Thanksgiving Day parade in Philadelphia, 1920?
5. Which President began the tradition of pardoning a turkey every year?
6. What was the first balloon in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in NYC (1927)?
7. What two states have towns named "Turkey?"
8. What NFL team began the tradition of having a football game on Thanksgiving in 1934?

Put Your Blessing To Good Use!

Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our Thanksgiving.

— W.T. Purkiser



It is Well with My Soul



The hymn *"It is Well with My Soul"* becomes closest to heart for one undergoing grief.

Written by a Presbyterian lawyer Horatio G. Spafford (1828-1888), this deeply touching song has long been loved. The Bible scripture reference is Psalm 46:1 *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."*

Spafford was a successful lawyer in Chicago who maintained a keen interest in Christian activities, deeply spiritual and devoted to the scriptures. Sometime in 1871, a fire in Chicago heavily devastated the city, and just months before that, Spafford had invested hugely in real estate by the shore of Lake Michigan. The disaster greatly wiped out his holdings. Before the fire, Spafford also experienced the loss of his son.

Two years after the fire, Horatio Spafford planned a trip to Europe for him and his family. The day in November they were due to depart, Spafford had a last minute business transaction and had to stay behind in Chicago. Nevertheless, he still sent his wife and four daughters to travel as scheduled on the S.S. *Ville du Havre*, expecting to follow in a few days.

On November 22, the ship laden with his wife and daughters was struck by the *Lockhearn*, an English vessel, and sank in a few minutes.

After the survivors were finally landed somewhere at Cardiff, Wales, Spafford's wife cabled her husband with two simple words, "Saved alone."

Shortly after, Spafford left by ship on his way where his beloved four daughters had drowned, and pen at hand, wrote this most poignant text so significantly descriptive of his own personal grief – *"When sorrows like sea billows roll..."* The hymn "It is Well with My Soul" was born.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

O God, we thank you for this earth, our home;

For the wide sky and the blessed sun,

For the salt sea and the running water,

For the everlasting hills and the never-resting winds,

For trees and the common grass underfoot. we thank you for our senses by which we hear the songs of birds,



And see the splendor of the summer fields,

And taste of the autumn fruits,

And rejoice in the feel of the snow,

And smell the breath of the spring.

Grant us a heart wide open to all this beauty; and save our souls from being so blind

That we pass unseeing when even the common thorn bush is aflame with your glory,

O God our creator, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

— Walter Rauschenbusch

Answers to Thanksgiving Quiz

1. George Washington
2. F.D. Roosevelt
3. Canada
4. Gimbel's
5. Harry Truman
6. Felix the Cat
7. Texas and North Carolina
8. The Detroit Lions.