

Thanksgiving around the World!!

Canada

Thanksgiving, also known as *Jour de l'Action de Grâce* (in Canadian French), usually occurs on the second Monday of October. The original way of saying thanks to God on this holiday is going to the church, but most of the families make a special dinner at home to give thanks and celebrate it at home. It is celebrated in all of the Canadian provinces except for New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.



Liberia

In the West African country of Liberia, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the first Thursday of November. It follows the same traditions as Thanksgiving Day in Canada. The Liberians have several holidays in common with the United States. Besides Thanksgiving, Liberians also have the Independence Day in July.

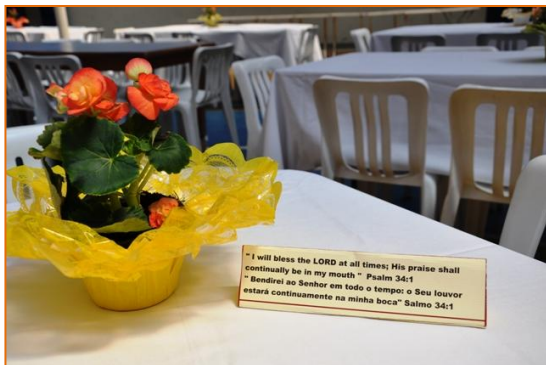
Norfolk Island

In Norfolk Island, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the last Wednesday of November. It is one day before the pre-World War II American observance. This means the Norfolk Island observance is the day before, or six days after the United States' observance. The holiday was brought to the island by visiting American whaling ships.



United States

Thanksgiving, currently celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November, has been an annual tradition in the United States by presidential proclamation since 1863. Thanksgiving began as a tradition of celebrating the harvest of the year by the Pilgrims.



OLM

Thanksgiving at OLM was a success! A lot of people came for the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and to eat the delicious food served by our cooks. Families got together, prayed the Te Deum with our Chaplain and sang with the other families. After the blessing our Superintendent, Mr. Rundle, gave a fabulous speech about the history of Thanksgiving and how important it is to give thanks to God. After the ceremony there was a top dinner with corn, turkey and mashed potatoes. Everybody ate like they hadn't eaten anything for at least 50 years. 😊

Mariana Ferrer ('16)

THE THANKSGIVING PARADOX



J. Rundle, November 24, 2011

Thanksgiving is an historical, cultural, and spiritual paradox. Regarding the history of this special holiday, any student in any American school around the world can tell you the story of how in the year 1621, the “First Thanksgiving” was celebrated by English Pilgrims and native American Indians in the Plymouth, Massachusetts colony. Paradoxically, however, the first recorded communal Thanksgiving celebration in North America was actually celebrated 80 years before, in 1541, by a Spanish explorer and his companions in western Texas. Furthermore, Thanksgiving did not become an official annual holiday celebration in the United States until 1863, nearly 250 years after the pilgrim’s “First Thanksgiving”, when in the midst of the American civil war, President Abraham Lincoln declared: *“I...invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart the last Thursday of November... as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwells in heaven.”* And so it turns out that the origins of this holiday are somewhat more complex than what many of us have been led to believe.

“Thanksgiving Day comes, by statute, just once a year; but to the honest person it comes as frequently as the heart of gratitude will allow.”

Culturally, Thanksgiving is often regarded as the quintessential American Holiday. The mention of Thanksgiving conjures up images, tastes, and experiences that are uniquely American: Pilgrims and Indians, turkey with stuffing, pumpkin pie, cranberry sauce and, of course, falling asleep while watching football on television. Paradoxically, however, communal celebrations of thanks are as old and widespread as civilization itself. Ever since the first “successful hunt” and the first “good harvest” humans have gathered together to give thanks and celebrate their good fortune. Festivals, rituals, and traditions of “Giving Thanks” are well-documented in ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome and China, and they continue to be important features of virtually every society around the world today. And so it turns out that the American celebration of Thanksgiving is just one small and recent chapter in humankind’s story of communal expressions of thankfulness.

Finally, let us reflect for a moment on the spiritual aspect of Thanksgiving. Throughout history, from the ancient Greeks to Abraham Lincoln's declaration of 1863, celebrations of thanks generally had explicit ties to religion and even to specific Gods or Goddesses. It is interesting to note, however that in modern American Society Thanksgiving has become what we might call a "secular" holiday. Unlike Christmas



and Easter, unlike Hanukkah or Ramadan, it is not tied to any particular religion; it is not a feast or holiday of any particular church; and it does not require that one subscribes to any particular set of values, beliefs, or religious practices. All it requires is our humanity, and so it turns out that here we find the most striking and profound paradox of all: that in being independent of organized religious doctrine, Thanksgiving is the only holiday capable of spiritually uniting all people across time and space; and it does so by invoking one of our most fundamental human experiences, the experience of gratitude.



Paradoxically, it is this non-religious yet powerfully spiritual experience of gratitude which lays the foundation for all religious beliefs and practices found around the world today. It is gratitude that causes us to know deep within our hearts that a loving and generous God is present in our lives. It is gratitude that leads us to seek a relationship with this God through prayer. And it is gratitude which moves us to come together with others to share and express our spiritual selves through communal worship.

In closing allow me to share with you a short Thanksgiving quote from an early Twentieth-Century American writer by the name of Edward Sandford Martin. He wrote: "Thanksgiving Day comes, by statute, just once a year; but to the honest person it comes as frequently as the heart of gratitude will allow."

Happy Thanksgiving today, and every day.

