

26th November 2020

Thanksgiving

**“Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving,
and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms.”**

Bible, Psalm 95:1

In September 1620 *The Mayflower* left Plymouth, England, with 102 passengers – an assortment of religious separatists and other individuals lured by the promise of prosperity in the New World. After a treacherous and uncomfortable crossing that lasted 66 days, they dropped anchor near the tip of Cape Cod, far north of their intended destination at the mouth of the Hudson River. One month later, the *Mayflower* crossed Massachusetts Bay, where The Pilgrims, as they are now known, began the work of establishing a colony.

In 1621 they shared an autumn harvest feast with the Wampanoag Native Americans as one of the first Thanksgiving celebrations in the colonies. For more than two centuries thereafter, days of thanksgiving were celebrated by individual colonies and states, till, in 1863, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national Thanksgiving Day to be held each November. So this year, 26th November is Thanksgiving Day – and that’s today!

The Pilgrim Chronicler, Edward Winslow, tells us of the first thanksgiving celebration:

Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling ... so we might after a special manner rejoice together, after we had gathered the fruits of our labours; they four in one day killed as much fowl, as ... served the Company almost a week ... many of the Indians coming amongst us ... whom for three days we entertained and feasted ... And although it be not always so plentiful, as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want, that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.

“Yet, by the goodness of God, we are so far from want.” Can we say that too? I hope so, for, in the midst of hardships, complaints and even when we feel “it be not always plentiful”, let’s give ourselves to thanksgiving, for what we have and what we can share.

A prayer for today

Thank you! That’s enough! Just thank you, thank you, thank you. Amen

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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