



Stewardship

in Motion

November 2007

Happy Thanksgiving

Catherine Millard writes: "We can trace this historic American Christian tradition to the year 1623.



After the harvest crops were gathered in November 1623, Governor William Bradford of the 1620 Pilgrim Colony, "Plymouth Plantation" in Plymouth, Massachusetts proclaimed: *Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as he has protected us from the*

ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience, Now I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on the hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the daytime, on Thursday November 29th, of the year of our Lord 1623 and the third year since we Pilgrims landed on Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all his blessings.

Thanksgiving Day reminds us of what we should be all through the year. It is counted as a secular holiday, but we celebrate it in the Church because it gives expression to an attitude so characteristic of our faith. Thanksgiving represents the day the secularists finally got it right!

To lack thankfulness is not only unfortunate, it is an ugly thing. It is the mark of an inadequate life, an unfinished life, a warped and twisted life. In St. Paul's writings thanklessness is classed among the vices as a dark sin.

In the first chapter of Romans, Paul speaks of the guilt of those who have chosen not to acknowledge God – "for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened" (Romans 1:21). A thankless person is all wrapped up in self and that most often makes a very small package. It is self-defeating, self-depleting, and self-destroying.

Thanksgiving is a beautiful thing. It reminds us of healthy mindedness, graciousness, and good cheer. It brightens our lives. It sparkles with an invisible vitality. It makes the heart glad. ■

With Gladness & Thanksgiving



Giving is a very important part of being a Christian and a good steward. Christians realize that they have been recipients of God's lavish grace.

God has poured out rich blessings upon us, and we are filled with gratitude for his mercy and love. Therefore, attend Mass this holiday season and present your offerings to the Lord with gladness and thanksgiving. ■

A Baby's Hug

Sent to us by a parish secretary. Thank you "E".

After some Christmas shopping, my husband and I with our baby Erik stopped to get a bite to eat. I sat Eric in a high chair and noticed everyone was quietly sitting and talking.

Suddenly, Erik squealed with glee and said, "Hi." He pounded his fat baby hands on the high chair tray. His eyes were crinkled in laughter and his mouth was bared in a toothless grin, as he wriggled and giggled with merriment.

I looked around and saw the source of his merriment. It was a man whose pants were baggy and his toes poked out of would-be shoes. His shirt was dirty and his hair was uncombed, and his whiskers were too short to be called a beard.

"Hi there, baby. Hi there, big boy. I see ya, buster," the man said to Erik. My husband and I exchanged looks, "What do we do?" Erik continued to laugh and answer, "Hi". Everyone in the restaurant noticed and looked at us and then at the man.

Our meal came and the man began shouting from across the room, "Do ya patty cake? Do you know peek-a-boo? Hey, look, he knows peek-a-boo."

My husband and I were embarrassed. We ate in silence; all except for Erik, who was running through his repertoire for this admiring man, who in turn, reciprocated with his comments.

We finally got through the meal and headed for the door. My husband went to pay the check and told me to meet him in the parking lot.

The old man sat poised between me and the door. "Lord, just let me out of here before he speaks to me or Erik," I prayed. As I drew closer to the man, I turned my back trying to sidestep him. As I did, Erik leaned over my arm, reaching with both arms in a baby's "pick-me-up" position and before I could do anything further Eric was being held in the arms of the elderly man.

Suddenly a very old man and a very young baby consummated their love and kinship. Erik in an act of total trust, love, and submission laid his tiny head upon the man's ragged shoulder. The man's eyes closed, and I saw tears hover beneath his lashes. His aged hands full of grime, pain, and hard labor, cradled my baby's bottom and stroked his back.

I had just witnessed Christ's love shown through the innocence of a tiny child who saw no sin, who made no judgment.

. . . a child who saw a soul, and a Mother who saw a suit of clothes.

I was a Christian who was blind, holding a Child who was not.

No two beings have ever loved so deeply for so short a time. I stood awestruck. The old man rocked and cradled Erik in his arms and his eyes opened and set squarely on mine.

He said in a firm commanding voice, "You take care of this baby." Somehow I managed, "I will," from a throat that contained a stone.

He pried Erik from his chest, lovingly and longingly, as though he were in pain. I received my baby, and the man said, "God bless you, ma'am, you've given me my Christmas gift." I said nothing more than a muttered thanks.

With Erik in my arms, I ran for the car. My husband was wondering why I was crying and holding Erik so tightly, and why I was saying, "My God, my God, forgive me."

I had just witnessed Christ's love shown through the innocence of a tiny child who saw no sin, who made no judgment; a child who saw a soul, and a Mother who saw a suit of clothes. I was a Christian who was blind, holding a Child who was not.

I felt it was God asking, "Are you willing to share your son for a moment?" when He shared His for all eternity. The ragged old man, unwittingly, had reminded me, "To enter the Kingdom of God we must become as little children■"



As you share this holiday with family and friends, our blessings to everyone for a most Happy Thanksgiving.