

Column – Thanksgiving Month

Ask anyone from 5 to 90 what happens in November, and he will almost certainly say, Thanksgiving. For many families, it is the gathering of the clan, a day a feasting and football.

Will this year be different? After all, getting too many people together in a confined space is now considered risky behaviour. No doubt some creative alternatives are already being explored in many families.

My purpose in this column, however, is not to say what protective measures should be observed on Thanksgiving Day, but to suggest that the whole month be set aside as a time for thoughtful and thankful reflection.

The Psalmist points us in the right direction when he says: “It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High: To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night” (Psalm 92:1,2).

In particular, notice the phrases “in the morning and “every night”. Both which suggest that giving thanks is not to be reserved to one day a year. It’s a daily way of life.

This past year has been one of uncertainty and fear. Information about the coronavirus seems always to be changing. For example, at first, we were assured by those in the know that masks were not necessary; now, they are almost obligatory.

What’s the final truth? No one seems to know. So, what that means for most of us is that we follow the latest edicts, hoping for the best.

Is it possible in such a year to find something for which to be thankful every day, morning and evening, and keep this going for a whole month? Absolutely . . . especially if we focus not just on big things but on the many small joys and felicities of life.

I write this the day after the storm that caused many in North Georgia to lose electric power. I know what I was thankful for last night at 10 o’clock when the lights came back on. “Thank you, Lord, that the power has been restored but also for the dedicated linemen working throughout the night,” I found myself saying.

Just as thanksgiving is not just for Thanksgiving (the day) so the giving of thanks should not be confined to the great blessings of life but spread out to include the many small things, things that often go unnoticed.

Put this principle into play in your life and see how life changes. Before getting up and before going to bed, identify at least one object of thanksgiving.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we, thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men; We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen. (General Thanksgiving, Book of Common Prayer).

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