

Alleluia

Dove

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Thanksgiving — A Time of Remembrance for All God Has Done

From the Pastoral Team

What do you know about the background surrounding the holiday of Thanksgiving? You probably know about the Pilgrims and the Indians and how they came together to thank God for the harvest of their first year in the New World. But is there more than that?

There have been special thanksgiving ceremonies common among almost all religions for hundreds of years. In the English tradition which mostly affected our forefathers, you can trace thanksgiving ceremonies all the way back to Henry VIII.

The early settlers of New England replaced many of the holidays of their time with special days of fasting or days of thanksgiving depending on the circumstances of the times. The earliest date we can trace back to here in the U.S. is 1621 at Plymouth, which

was prompted by a good harvest that year. When the Colonists went out "fowling," probably for geese or ducks rather than the hard to catch turkeys, they reported that in one day they had captured enough to feed them for an entire week.

After the hunt, a group of about 90 Indians made a surprise appearance at the settlement gates. This at first alarmed the colonists, but after a short time they began socializing peacefully over the next few days. The Indians provided venison for the feast and the event resulted in a treaty that lasted more than 50 years. This first Thanksgiving set a precedent that would last off and on for many years.

Days of Thanksgiving were called in the colonies, mostly by church leaders, up until 1682. After that date,

many of the state and church leaders issued proclamations of Thanksgiving right up to the Revolutionary War. There were many days of special thanks to God during the war, thanking Him for events that were favorable to the colonists during their struggle with the British.

The first President of the United States, George Washington, proclaimed the first nationwide celebration on November 26, 1789, asking Americans to thank almighty God for the many favors He had poured out upon our nation. After that time, the country celebrated this special day of thanks rather randomly. Finally, in 1863 our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, proclaimed the final Thursday in November as a special day of

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*In everything give thanks; for this is God's
Will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Thessalonians 5:18)*

Daily Thanksgiving

By Karen Swenson

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How I love the day of giving thanks and the traditions that make up our family's celebration. Twelve years ago, however, would be a different kind of year. Not all of our eight children would make it home for the holiday. As our family grew, so too, did the challenges. There are school schedules, work schedules, babies coming and in-laws to share the day.

This day would be all the more different as I had just been diagnosed with cancer, and I was determined to not let our joy be stolen from us.

"In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." — 1 Thessalonians 5:18

I was fighting my first bout with cancer, but cancer would not hold me captive. As we returned home from Mass, I announced I would be doing all the cooking myself. I was at war, and I was not going to give in to this enemy. Could it be only six days since my surgery? It seemed like a lifetime ago, but there I sat on the patio, sipping coffee, bundled up against the chilly Southern breeze and watching the leaves from the pecan trees float gently to the ground. I smiled at the thought that they looked like paratroopers jumping out of the back of an airplane. I checked my list one more time and I was off to the warmth of the kitchen that holds so many treasured memories.

As I spent the day cooking and the aroma of the dinner traveled through the house, I sang and hummed and kept peeking in on the annual TV parade that no one really watches but my husband, Steve. He jokingly bemoans the fact that out of all the children and grandchildren, he never made a parade convert out of any of them. Now, twelve years later, he has a few fringe fans, but they must have their pacifiers to sit for any amount of time.

The table was set, the vegetables and stuffing made, the desserts stashed on top of the refrigerator and the place cards decorated with sweet pilgrim and pumpkin stickers. What a wonderful day. Phone calls were exchanged with all the loved ones who could not be with us, from our children and siblings to one of my brothers and me sharing opinions on how our stuffings turned out this year. As I removed the turkey from the oven and started the gravy, I was pleased with the fact that I had accomplished

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Thanksgiving

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thanks in an attempt to bring unity to the country. However, the Confederate States did not recognize this and it did not go into effect nation-wide until after reconstruction.

In addition to the U.S., the following countries have a day called Thanksgiving: Canada, Germany, Grenada, Japan, Liberia and The Netherlands. Many continue to give thanks on this day and some do so to a God that they may not even know. However, we recognize, along with many other Christians in our country, that it is only through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that we have so many blessings, both individually and on us as a country. We need to gather our families together on this day to lift our voices to heaven to praise and thank our Almighty Father for the great love

He has lavished upon us.

The history of Thanksgiving is born from people who knew hardships and very little ease. The Pilgrims saw God's abundant blessings and actively praised Him, which made Thanksgiving a day worth remembering. "Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father." (Eph 5:20) We, as His people, especially need to give Him thanks for another year of unity and growth in the Spirit. We have gone through such things in our *Dove* as the importance of prayer in our lives; miracles in our midst and healings in the Body of Christ; how Scripture and our reading of the Bible impact our relationships; the way social media impacts us both for good and evil; and how we are called to spend time with one another, especially outside of our normal interactions.

The Pastoral team has been unpacking many of the rules in our *Rule*

of Life and calling us to put into action those things we firmly hold in common. It has been a great year filled with joys and sorrows, but mostly one we can look back on and say to God, "Thank You for the gift You have given us called the Alleluia community."



Daily Thanks



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this meal preparation single-handedly.

It was time for Steve to carve the turkey and I was about to test the gravy...Wait...what was that peculiar smell? Something was not right. A family consult began and the conclusion was -- something was rotten! That something was the turkey! Wh-hhhaatttt? I worked so hard to end up with NO TURKEY? We stood and looked at each other in disbelief. I retreated to the patio once again, this time with little enthusiasm or gratitude. As I sat pondering what went wrong and how did I miss the turkey's rancid smell, I felt a wave of conviction wash over me. What was the whole point of me wanting to do this on my own? Why had I allowed my pride to overtake the blessing of our family working together? I immediately thought of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead...think about it. He is God and could have said but the word and the burial bands would have fallen to the ground. Instead, Jesus called Lazarus forth, then turned him over to the community of believers and said "untie him and let him go." (John 11:44) Jesus wants us to need each other!

Sitting there, I repented of my pride and could not help but quietly chuckle at my folly. Our menu now consisted of a selection of vegetables, stuffing and pumpkin and pecan pies. We would laugh about this someday...right? As I got up to go inside, my dear friend and former babysitter was walking through the back yard to her mother's home next door. We exchanged hugs and I told her the story of the turkey. Without a blink of an eye, she told me she always roasts an extra turkey, even when she eats at her mom's, and she wanted me to have it and the gravy. I was dumb-

Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Catholic Fraternity in Rome

By Dan Almeter

Part I — Fresh from participating in the Glory Run on October 31st, Bob Garrett, Marie and I left for Atlanta to catch a flight to Rome for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Catholic Fraternity. We arrived one day early to sleep off the jet lag, but took advantage of meeting an acquaintance of Dan's — Ashley Noronha — who is on the board for the "Resurrection" movie tied to Dan's book on unity. Ashley and her husband, John, work in art and social communication at the Vatican. It was a very blessed meeting.

The anniversary celebration was divided into three parts over six days. The first day was the meeting of the Executive members of the Fraternity. One of the main topics of discussion in the Executive was the planning of the Golden Jubilee for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Rome for Pentecost, 2017. The event will start

founded. Within minutes, the menu expanded, the family gathered, and I was moved to tears over the love Jesus has for each of us even in our self-absorbed pride, and how much love my friend had for me even in my foolishness.

I learned an important lesson that Thanksgiving, and as I live out my need for fellow believers, I try to remind myself that Thanksgiving is not an annual celebration, but a daily one. Thanks be to God.

Karen Swenson, a retired school teacher and social worker, serves as a Handmaid to the Elders of Alleluia Community, giving input from a womanly perspective. She also leads women's retreats and writes about family matters. Karen and Steve, her husband of 46 years, are the parents of 8 and grandparents of 21.

on Wednesday, May 31, and culminate in St. Peter's Square on June 4. The Catholic Fraternity will also meet following this event for a couple of days. There will be a strong ecumenical gathering as part of the Pentecost event.

Everyone who would like to travel to Rome for this should let Dan know so he can keep you informed with details — many communities plan to bring their youth, so this would be a great opportunity for our older teens and singles.

A highlight for me was that while the Executive was meeting, we received a personal phone call from Pope Francis on Julia Torres' cell phone (the woman we have raised money for). He simply had a question to ask us. (The Catholic Fraternity is very close to the heart of Pope Francis.)

After the Executive meetings, the Council of the Catholic Fraternity met together for two days. The Council is made up of all the community leaders and their alternates or spouses. There were about 120 of us present for this — including Bob and Marie. The theme of our conference was "Mercy and Evangelization" based on Pope Francis' focus of these issues.

Four of us gave a major address to this group to include a bishop from Poland, a leader from Emanuel Community, the leader of Disciples of Jesus in Canberra, Australia, and me. My talk was on the issue of homosexuality and how to minister with both truth and compassion. It was very well-received.

One result is that now Dan will travel to Brazil next May to address several communities and their national conference on the topic. I was especially blessed that Bobby Phil-

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Catholic Fraternity Meets

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lips joined us at the conference for my talk. He looks great with his new beard and seems very happy to be studying at the North American College for U.S. seminarians. Let's keep him in our prayers!

The general conference then began and lasted for three days with about 400 present. It was amazing. It opened with a talk by Shayne Bennett, a founder of the Fraternity, immediately followed by Bob Garrett, who "blessed the socks off of everyone." He led us into a time of reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics. The whole conference had a strong ecumenical theme and also included major talks by Pastor Giovanni Traettino – the Pentecostal pastor and close friend of Pope Francis. Also, Matteo Calisi, who is the former president of the Catholic Fraternity and apostle for unity, gave an excellent talk on unity. He also showed a video clip of him and others praying over Pope Francis (then Cardinal Bergoglio) in Buenos Aires in 2007 for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Amazing!

Pope Francis sent a letter to all of us gathered during our time together. Among other things, he once again commissioned us to bring the baptism of the Holy Spirit to every part of the church and the whole world. He reminded us that "the new Pentecost" is ecumenical at its roots and to pro-

mote spiritual ecumenism always. He also reminded us to reach out to the poor.

Other major speakers for the conference included Patti Gallagher Mansfield and Sister Briege McKennon. Patti gave a riveting detailed account of the Holy Spirit's falling on the Duquesne weekend in February, 1967. And Sr. Briege was amazing – a modern-day apostle. Bob, in particular, got to spend lots of one-on-one time with both Patti and Sister Briege.

The fellowship at this kind of event is so rich, it can hardly be put into words. For example, Marie and I spent many hours sitting with Damian Stayne and his wife, Cathy. (Damian will be part of the international group of leaders coming to Augusta next July for the Kairos conference.) We spent many hours with the other U.S. Fraternity leaders as well.

The Servants of Jesus Community from Sydney had a major impact on the conference. Their leaders brought with them 20 youth who were divided into two mission groups – one on their way to Malta, and the other to Uganda. During the conference, they led us all into an experience of the "prophetic." For one session, the youth stood up and began to call out members and give them a prophetic sense and personal prophecy. Amazing! Some international leaders were weeping as the Lord revealed things on their hearts. Bob, Marie and I learned so much from these youth!

There are so many things to share from this trip, but these are a few of the highlights. I assure you; we never

**No Dove Monday,
November 30
due to Thanksgiving
break**

stopped from early morning till late at night. The one "side trip" happened at the end of the conference. With the conference over and five hours to spare, Bob, Marie and myself, Alan and Vickie Holtaus from Topeka, Tom and Sarah Singer from Mother of God, and Shawn and Joan Scott from Steubenville, took a 20-minute train ride to Castel Gondolfo – the pope's summer residence. The trip made a lasting memory and the beauty of the scenery in this town was breathtaking.

For me personally, this time with the Fraternity was very important. I had a sort of "aha" moment – perhaps even a "mystical experience" of the value of Alleluia Community being part of the Catholic Fraternity. Sometimes people ask (and I have been one of them) if the time, money and energy that we put into the Fraternity is worth it. I will close this long article by assuring you that the relationships we have forged with these other communities all these years has helped to enrich Alleluia in untold ways. Without the relationships and gifts they have shared with us, we would be a much poorer community. The impact our ecumenical witness has had on the Catholic Fraternity is huge and can't be underestimated.

[The whole conference can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC49Qc6nyy5VoOgcEDAw-fzbw>.]

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Bob Garrett addressing the Council



Dan & Marie with Chris & Valerie Noone, leaders of Servants of Jesus



Julia Torres with Dan Almeter