

My Beloved Ones,

This Thursday we shall celebrate the annual American holiday of Thanksgiving. As they have for generations, millions of families will gather on this fourth Thursday in November in a spirit of fellowship and love, to renew the bonds of affection and care with one another.

While there can be a tendency in our modern society to emphasize the material comforts of the holiday—like the delicious food, the entertainment, and even early holiday shopping—we Orthodox Christians know that the act of thanksgiving is not just some passing day of celebration, but an act which is central to our worship. The Eucharist, the most important sacrament and act of union with our Creator, comes from the Greek word for Thanksgiving, εὐχαριστία.

For Orthodox Christians, being thankful is not simply an annual commemoration with the day of Thanksgiving, or even just a weekly practice during Sunday's Divine Liturgy: it should instead be a daily occurrence. As the Psalmist says, it is good to “...*declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, and Your faithfulness every night*”. (*Psalm 92:2*)

Even in the midst of trying times and personal difficulties we must always hold fast to the wonder of the world our God has created, and greet ever new day with humility that it has been granted for us to see it. This outlook befits the glory of a God who loves us, and wants us to see the world as He sees us.

Truly, it is my fervent hope that you and your families have a blessed Thanksgiving, full of warmth and love. Furthermore, it is my wish that each of us carry these feelings of gratitude toward God through the remainder of the Advent Fast, through the Nativity and the New Year, and indeed through each day of the rest of our lives.

God be with you, and with us all.

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Metropolitan of Atlanta

