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Thanksgiving Day, 1983

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Since the Pilgrims observed the initial Thanksgiving holiday in 1621, this occasion has served as a singular expression of the transcending spiritual values that played an instrumental part in the founding of our country.

One hundred and twenty years ago, in the midst of a great and terrible civil conflict, President Lincoln formally proclaimed a national day of Thanksgiving to remind those "insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God" of this Nation's bounty and greatness. Several days after the dedication of the Gettysburg battlefield, the United States celebrated its national Thanksgiving. Every year since then, our Nation has faithfully continued this tradition. The time has come once again to proclaim a day of thanksgiving, an occasion for Americans to express gratitude to their God and their country.

In his remarks at Gettysburg, President Lincoln referred to ours as a Nation "under God." We rejoice in the fact that, while we have maintained separate institutions of church and state over our 200 years of freedom, we have at the same time preserved reverence for spiritual beliefs. Although we are a pluralistic society, the giving of thanks can be a true bond of unity among our people. We can unite in gratitude for our individual freedoms and individual faiths. We can be united in gratitude for our Nation's peace and prosperity when so many in this world have neither.

As was written in the Thanksgiving Proclamation 120 years ago, "No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God." God has blessed America and her people, and it is appropriate we recognize this bounty.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, in the spirit of the Pilgrims, President Lincoln, and all succeeding Presidents, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 24, 1983, as a National Day of Thanksgiving, and I call upon Americans to affirm this day of thanks by their prayers and their gratitude for the many blessings upon this land and its people.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 15th day of Sept., in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan