

Thanksgiving in the United States

The 26 November is Thanksgiving in the United States - a holiday which, in its best and most meaningful form, encourages and inspires reflection and a feeling of gratitude.

For many, it is a day of being with loved ones and of celebrating with a shared meal. For others, it is a day that accentuates loneliness, loss, and lack of food to share.

Some who have more than enough for their own table take the day as an opportunity to be in solidarity and service and to foster connection in their local community. Many schools have a long-standing tradition of encouraging students to bring in food items to create Thanksgiving Baskets for local families, and this can be a meaningful opportunity to talk with young people about

social inequality, the importance of service, and seeing needs close to home. Too often, the conversation starts and ends there - a comfortable, once-a-year moment to wonder and to make an isolated gesture of kindness.

What would it look like, not only in the States but in the countries of our own District, to help young people have eyes to see and hearts to feel gratitude and to in this way be moved to a lifetime of response?

What does it mean to be thankful, to have gratitude, in this way? How might it change your actions? Your internal monologue? Your relationships?

How can we teach this kind of grateful living to the young people entrusted to our care?





Oh Lord, how can I thank you for all
the blessings you bestow, unless I
spend less on myself,
give more to others,
befriend the friendless,
help the helpless,
strengthen the weak,
lift up the downcast,
give faith to the faithless,
pray for the hopeless,
thank the thankless,
defend the defenseless,
embrace the rejected,
clothe the naked,
and feed the hungry?

Oh Lord, I do thank you, for I have
so much to thank you for.

But one thing I ask of you,
and one thing only:

Help me to thank you
not just with heart and lips,
but by the very life I live.

~ **Charles E. Moore**

(Charles E. Moore is an American author, pastor, and teacher. He is a member of the Bruderhof and lives at the Mount Community in New York State with his wife and daughter. He writes for Plough Quarterly and blogs at Bruderhof.com.)

Lasallian Reflection is developed by the Lasallian Formation for Mission Team.

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