



11-10-23

To: Friends – Customers – Co-workers

Subject: A Time of Thanks

Friends,

We have a lot to be grateful for, even if the stresses of daily life over shadow this truth at times. The feeling of gratitude while always healthy for us is given it's own day in the United States, "Thanksgiving", the 4th Thursday in November. My Canadian neighbors (I live in Canada during the summer months) celebrate Thanksgiving the second Monday in October. While the US celebrates the feast shared by the Pilgrims and Wampanoags in 1621, Canadian Thanksgiving is a feast that celebrates the safe return for British explorer, Arthur Frobisher and crew, from the search of the Northwest Passage in 1578. Though in Quebec it is sometimes traced to 17th century French settlers celebrating prosperous harvests. In Quebec it's referred to "Action de Grace" or action of grace. In Mexico, Thanksgiving is less formal and less widespread but the name is appealing as well "Dia de Accion de Gracias".

In the 1940s, Brazilian ambassador Joaquim Nabuco returned home from a trip to the US enthusiastic about the commemorations at St. Patrick's Cathedral on Thanksgiving Day. He suggested to President Gaspar Dutra to institute the celebration in Brazil as well. Like many Brazilian festivals, it begins in Church and ends as a carnival. "Thanks" or gratitude for the grace in our lives is a real blessing that I hope for all of us.

The story of America's Thanksgiving:

America's forefathers, the pilgrims, landed on the shores of Massachusetts Bay at Plymouth on December 21st, 1620, after a tough, tough journey. We know about the success of the Mayflower. The Speedwell, the Mayflower's sister ship, did not make it. The Northerly winds had taken the Mayflower far north of its Virginia Colony destination. Landing in New England at the start of a bitterly cold, bleak winter, the Pilgrims were presented with immediate hardships. Roughly half of those that landed with the Mayflower in December were dead by spring including Governor Carver from exposure, Indian attacks, and malnutrition.

The Pilgrims were a frugal people, and very industrious. Under the leadership of Captain Miles Standish and Governor Bradford, those remaining Pilgrims rebuilt the stockade surrounding their little village and with nine (9) men conquered the largest village of unfriendly Indians, forcing a peace with them. Friendly Indians taught them how to plant corn and other domestic crops and the favorable weather during the summer of 1621 with lots of hard work resulted in an abundance of food.

The Pilgrims during the fall of 1621 decided to give thanks for God's grace on their efforts with a feast. It lasted three days, and ninety Indians were present for fowl, venison, fish, corn and other vegetables. Their trials were not over but they would go on to pay off their debt in the form of lumber, fur and fish to the London merchants who bank rolled them in seven years (years ahead of time).

We also have many trials in front of us including unstable world politics, inflation, competitive threats, family losses, etc. And while we are far from perfect and opportunities for improvement abound, we are thankful for God's grace.

Happy Thanksgiving to you, your families, and your organizations.

Joe McNamara

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