



Grand Commandery of Minnesota

## *Knights Templar*

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### Put the Thanks Back into Thanksgiving

By S.K. Tom Hendrickson P.G.M.

To me Thanksgiving has been lost between Halloween and Christmas and has become a forgotten holiday. I went into a store just before Labor Day and all the Halloween decorations, candy and costumes were out on display. Then a few weeks later when I went back to purchase Halloween candy, the Christmas decorations, lights, and artificial trees were on sale!

I know that it is hard to believe, but from the time the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock and for three and half centuries, friends and families gathered together sharing the bounty of their efforts and spending time together strengthening their spiritual bonds. Together they took time to recognize and thank God for the blessings in their lives. Then somewhere in time Thanksgiving was hijacked and turned into just a day of football and shopping.

Thanksgiving has been reduced to just become a springboard for the Christmas shopping season. November 26<sup>th</sup> is a day spent looking thru the store advertising and preparing for that strategic shopping adventure, with many of the stores opening on Thanksgiving evening for the pre-Black Friday shopping. Of course, before the shopping there is the big meal and plenty of football to be consumed.

To me Thanksgiving should celebrate the ideals which makes our country flourish, religious and personal freedom, family values,

shared prosperity, stability, bounty, safe harbor and most important is gratitude to God for all our blessings.

Thanksgiving should be a day when we share a meal with our loved ones that nourishes our bodies. We spend time together strengthening our spiritual bonds and together we are thankful for God's presence and blessing in our daily lives

Now, not every Thanksgiving has been over the river and thru the woods to Grandma's house. Some of us ate Thanksgiving dinner from a Mermite food container dropped out of a chopper at a Firebase overseas. Some of us ate crackers at a hospital while a loved one was in Intensive Care, or we ate at a Police Station, at a Truck Stop or at the Salvation Army.

Sometimes we must look beyond our daily struggles and examine our lives to count and focus on our blessings. This lesson was driven home hard for me one day just recently. I was at a local restaurant and at the table next to mine was a young man in a wheelchair. He had lost both legs and his right arm as a Marine in Iraq. We had a nice talk then he said something that moves me to this day. He said that he was really thankful that he still had his eyesight and he thanks God every day he is still alive.

We look to the Bible and King David wrote in Psalms 100:4(NIV) Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. And Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:20 (NIV) Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As men of faith and as Sir Knights we should remember that the spirit of Thanksgiving should be present with us each and every day.

### Sing to the Lord with Thanksgiving;

**Psalms 147:7 NKJV**