



Grand Commandery of Minnesota

## *Knights Templar*

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...giving

There are several words in the dictionary which end with “giving”; the longest is thanksgiving, with 12 letters. Some of the other words are: ungiving, misgiving, and forgiving/unforgiving.

The last few years in our country (some may say the world) have seen the rise of ungiving across societies and nations. By ungiving, not so much in the sense of frugality, but that of inflexibility. Sadly, along with ungiving comes misgivings. An unhealthy distrust, skepticism, and suspicion of nearly everything seems to be pervasive, nearly everywhere you turn. Fortunately, we as Freemasons are taught the value and necessity of toleration. In some small way, each individual Mason can help counteract the misgivings of the ungiving. We must set an example by being forgiving, and practicing forgiveness.

A recent national Masonic magazine highlighted an individual who bluntly and essentially stated he is unforgiving. Not a Masonic or Knightly attitude, is it? The New Commandment to “love one another” is an alternative way of stating that in our day-to-day lives, forgiving is necessary in order to move on. It is by no means political, or a political statement. Even the prayer taught us by Jesus states “forgive us our debts (sins), as we forgive our debtors (those who sin against us)”. And so, forgiving leads to thanksgiving.

Nowadays, when we hear the word “thanksgiving”, we think of the national holiday on the fourth Thursday of November. American lore has the Thanksgiving day modeled after a harvest feast shared by the early New England colonists and the native Wampanoag

people. The colonists’ Thanksgivings were days of prayer thanking God for all his blessings, a tradition which is continued today.

Harvest festivals of thanksgiving are nothing new. The Jewish Festival of Sukkoth goes back thousands of years, and commemorates the period after their exodus from Egypt. Then, as now, Thanksgiving by any other name recognizes the mercies which God has bestowed upon us, for which we give thanks.

It’s sheer coincidence that “thanksgiving” has 12 letters, and that there were 12 Apostles! As such, thinking of thanksgiving can be a simple reminder to keep Christ, his teachings, and his followers in mind when giving thanks for all that we enjoy. We can endeavor to give thanks daily, by living a Christ-like life.

Please make an effort this Thanksgiving to humbly ask forgiveness of your faults. Forgive others for real or perceived actions which hurt you. Give thanks for all the mercies God has extended us as a country, and as Christian Freemasons. Above all, act in and think with a Spirit of compassion, which is love.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Mark Anderson

Grand Prelate, 2021-2022

Grand Commandery of Knights Templar, Minnesota