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Archiepiscopal Encyclical for Thanksgiving

November 26, 2026

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, Presvyteres and Diakonisses, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Sacred Archdiocese of America:

We praise You, we bless You, we give thanks to You ….

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Thanksgiving Day Holiday is a reminder to every American to be grateful to God for all of the blessings of our Country. For those of us who are Orthodox Christians, our sense of thanksgiving goes well beyond the many benefits of living in this great Nation. In fact, at every Divine Liturgy, we express our deepest gratitude to God for His gift to us of Eternal Life in Jesus Christ.

But the reality of Life Everlasting in the Kingdom of Heaven seems to be a future promise, without immediate verification. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Every Divine Liturgy is meant to transport us into the actuality of the Kingdom of God – here and now! As the Paschal Homily of Saint John Chrysostom so beautifully says:

The table is full-laden; let all feast sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go away hungry. Let all enjoy the banquet of faith: Let all receive the riches of loving-kindness.

This is true at every Divine Liturgy. It is also true at every Thanksgiving Day Holiday meal. And if we want it to be so, it can be true at every meal – shared or alone – and at every moment of our lives. For in God there is only "Now!" The mind-set of faith and gratitude, our *phronema*, is capable of seeing in ways that defy the regrets of the past and any anxiety for the future. Thus, we can live in the present moment filled with hopefulness, based in love for God and love for one another.

Therefore, on this Thanksgiving Day, let us praise our God, let us bless our God, and let us give thanks to our God for all the blessings of living in this great Country, and for all the blessings of life, of liberty, and of love. Happy Thanksgiving to all!

With gratitude in the Lord for each and every one of you,



†ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America