

Happy National Eucharist Day

Thanksgiving: the most Catholic of the national holidays that don't coincide with an actual Catholic holiday. The reason is simple: everyone *wants* to be Catholic, whether they realize it or not.

Here we are celebrating the day when our nation "gives thanks" for all the stuff we're thankful for. We know we're giving thanks for the cooperation between the Pilgrims and the Indians to bring about a good harvest and a mutual understanding of some sort back in the day, but we're also giving thanks that this nation, under God, dedicated on the proposition that *all* men are created equal, provides the protections and the opportunities of liberty and freedom from tyranny.

All discussions about the ever expanding government encroaching upon those liberties aside (I'll sheathe that sword for now) just think about what this day entails...

A tradition: Celebrating the end of the harvest, even though so few of us harvest any longer, and sharing a common meal with family and friends.

Processions: Thanksgiving Day parades. Macy's being the iconic one.

A ritual: Prayer, listing things we're thankful for, setting aside old grievances, preparing the meal, carving the turkey, Detroit Lions football.

A shared meal with a common victim: Think about it: the most basic item menu for Thanksgiving is that turkey. We all eat the meat of a turkey that was slaughtered for our common feast. And we share this meal with our closest friends, recognizing the importance of this shared meal, this shared moment in our familial and national life.

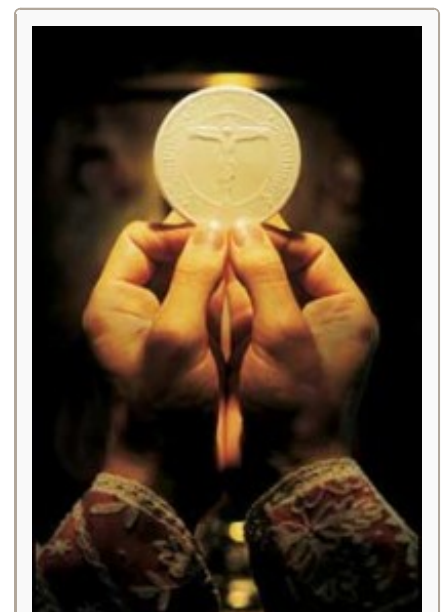
Local customs and variations: Can't list them all, but I've heard stories about different families with their ethnic customizations of the Thanksgiving feast, while still retaining that turkey.

And we call it "Thanksgiving." But consider: the Greek for "To be grateful, feel thankful," is *εὐχαριστέω*, which transliterates to "eucharisteo," from which we get the word, "eucharist."

The Mass, and the eucharist we receive from it, are the supreme act of thanksgiving: God offering Himself to Himself on our behalf, and we participating out of humble gratitude, bringing our contribution of service.

Yes: everyone, every nation, every people, every yearning for the Divine, wants what we have in our Catholic faith, whether they realize it or not: the desire to give thanks in the most fitting way possible; the recognition that thankfulness is a necessary and hallowed disposition. As a nation we set aside a day to give thanks for the harvest and the goods of nature and our labors, and it is good and proper that we do so. It is very eucharistic.

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone. Thank God for His providence in this land and in so many other places, that no matter where one lives, no matter the government, no matter the times, His peace can be found, can be effective, can be transformative, provided one maintains a disposition of thankfulness for His uncountable and unimaginable gifts.





What the turkey wishes it could be.