

# Thanksgiving

The pages of American history portray Thanksgiving, 1621, as a gathering of Pilgrim and Indian families offering thanks to God. They prepared and shared that first Thanksgiving dinner. This special day, however, did not become an established holiday until George Washington's Proclamation in 1789. Even then, Thanksgiving did not become the celebration and holiday that we know today.

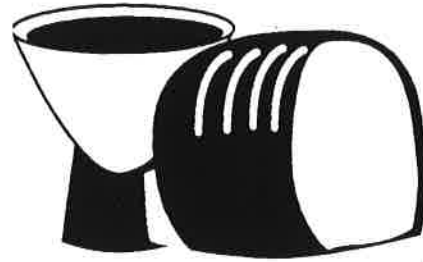
We set aside this day to think about our blessings and to thank God for all that we have been given. It is a day when families and extended families gather together to share food, good company and prayer.

## Blessings for Family Meals

Each time a family gathers for a meal, children become part of the family story. Today's exciting news—trouble or adventure in school, problems or success at work, somehow always make it to the dinner table. Sometimes future plans and hopes are shared at meals. At more leisurely meals, stories of the past are told and re-told. In some homes, a family meal together is a rare event, thus making it a very special time when it does happen.

The Eucharistic liturgy is based on a traditional Jewish family meal, the Passover. At this ritualistic meal, stories were told; the past, present and future of this family were all part of these stories. At Mass, we listen to the stories of the New and Old Testament, our religious family history. We pray for the concerns of the present and express our hope for the future throughout Mass.

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## Grace Before Meals

A Gallup poll asked Americans this question: "Does someone say grace or give thanks to God aloud before family meals at home?"

Always	21%
Frequently	13%
Occasionally	27%
Never	37%
Not sure	2%

In order to set the tone of a family meal as a special time, we suggest a blessing that can be sung. Children love to sing and pray.

### Bless This Food

(Sung to: *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*)

Bless, bless, bless this food,  
Bless this food we pray.  
Bless, bless, bless all those  
Bless all those who dine,  
And feed the poor wherever they are  
On this your bread and wine.

### God, Our Father

(Sung to: *Frere Jacques*)

God, our Father,  
God, our Father,  
Once again, Once again,  
We will ask Your blessing,  
We will ask Your blessing,  
Amen. Amen.