

Proclamation 3560**THANKSGIVING DAY, 1963****By the President of the United States of America****A Proclamation**November 4, 1963

Over three centuries ago, our forefathers in Virginia and in Massachusetts, far from home in a lonely wilderness, set aside a time of thanksgiving. On the appointed day, they gave reverent thanks for their safety, for the health of their children, for the fertility of their fields, for the love which bound them together and for the faith which united them with their God.

So too when the colonies achieved their independence, our first President in the first year of his first Administration proclaimed November 26, 1789, as "a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God" and called upon the people of the new republic to "beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions * * * to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue * * * and generally to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best."

And so too, in the midst of America's tragic civil war, President Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of November 1863 as a day to renew our gratitude for America's "fruitful fields," for our "national strength and vigor," and for all our "singular deliverances and blessings."

Much time has passed since the first colonists came to rocky shores and dark forests of an unknown continent, much time since President Washington led a young people into the experience of nationhood, much time since President Lincoln saw the American nation through the ordeal of fraternal war—and in these years our population, our plenty and our power have all grown apace. Today we are a nation of nearly two hundred million souls, stretching from coast to coast, on into the Pacific and north toward the Arctic, a nation enjoying the fruits of an ever-expanding agriculture and industry and achieving standards of living unknown in previous history. We give our humble thanks for this.

Yet, as our power has grown, so has our peril. Today we give our thanks, most of all, for the ideals of honor and faith we inherit from our forefathers—for the decency of purpose, steadfastness of resolve and strength of will, for the courage and the humility, which they possessed and which we must seek every day to emulate. As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words but to live by them.

Let us therefore proclaim our gratitude to Providence for manifold blessings—let us be humbly thankful for inherited ideals—and let us resolve to share those blessings and those ideals with our fellow human beings throughout the world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOHN F. KENNEDY, President of the United States of America, in consonance with the joint resolution of the Congress approved December 26, 1941, 55 Stat. 862 (5 U.S.C. 87b), designating the fourth Thursday of November in each year as Thanksgiving Day, do hereby proclaim Thursday, November 28, 1963, as a day of national thanksgiving.

On that day let us gather in sanctuaries dedicated to worship and in homes blessed by family affection to express our gratitude for the glorious gifts of God; and let us earnestly and humbly pray that

He will continue to guide and sustain us in the great unfinished tasks of achieving peace, justice, and understanding among all men and nations and of ending misery and suffering wherever they exist.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this fourth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and sixty-three, [SEAL] and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and eighty-eighth.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

By the President:

DEAN RUSK,
Secretary of State.

Proclamation 3561

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

By the President of the United States of America

November 23, 1963

A Proclamation

To the People of the United States:

John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 35th President of the United States, has been taken from us by an act which outrages decent men everywhere.

He upheld the faith of our fathers, which is freedom for all men. He broadened the frontiers of that faith, and backed it with the energy and the courage which are the mark of the Nation he led.

A man of wisdom, strength, and peace, he moulded and moved the power of our Nation in the service of a world of growing liberty and order. All who love freedom will mourn his death.

As he did not shrink from his responsibilities, but welcomed them, so he would not have us shrink from carrying on his work beyond this hour of national tragedy.

He said it himself: "The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it—and the glow from that fire can truly light the world."

Now, therefore, I, Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States of America, do appoint Monday next, November 25, the day of the funeral service of President Kennedy, to be a national day of mourning throughout the United States. I earnestly recommend the people to assemble on that day in their respective places of divine worship, there to bow down in submission to the will of Almighty God, and to pay their homage of love and reverence to the memory of a great and good man. I invite the people of the world who share our grief to join us in this day of mourning and rededication.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

DONE at the City of Washington this twenty-third day of November in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and sixty-three, [SEAL] and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and eighty-eighth.

LYNDON B. JOHNSON

By the President:

DEAN RUSK,
Secretary of State.