

A letter of *Thanksgiving*

Dear fellow Americans. As we gather with family and good friends this Thursday we would do well to spend some time contemplating our country's prospects for survival some 400 plus years after the first get-together in the new world with the 'natives.' Digging into a dead bird and smothering it with gravy should give us pause and plenty of room to contemplate how lucky we are as a nation. Thanksgiving dinner and the groaning table of food are really a metaphor for the value of stock-taking of the tangible things we so often take for granted on a daily basis like our basic freedoms to gather, to speak our minds without recrimination or retribution and to be free from the overreaching grasp of abusive government intrusion into our daily lives.

In the Thanksgiving paradigm, food is the obvious first item. Valuable as a fuel for our bodies and for the great calming force that it provides, breaking bread enables people with vastly differing opinions to recognize a common need and to subordinate everything else while they satisfy it...that is under normal circumstances. This Thanksgiving is an outlier, hopefully just a temporary anomaly that we must endure until things return to normal, but it is an outlier. The problem with that view is that 'things' may never return to the normal that past Thanksgivings celebrated. Granted, things have never been perfect for all Americans over the course of four centuries nor will they ever be, but in years past we were able to look each other in the eye and say, "better days are coming." For many, this is not the case in 2021. Seldom can we meet the gaze of family members who've lined up on 'the other side' of the political aisle and who are now threatening to upend traditional America and its values.

What passed for the occasional 'blip' or slip of the tongue on Thanksgiving Day from a relative who had tiddled a bit too much has now become the normal fare of dinner table conversation. The knives are out, and they're not just looking for a second helping of dark meat. Lightheartedness is nowhere to be found. A meal is now but another opportunity to score political points or to plunge the ideological dagger into the beating heart of a loved one. No. Supping with one's family has now become a cage match of idea body-slammings. To be sure, "over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go," but now we go clothed in Kevlar and loaded for bear instead of turkey.

The peacemakers in America's families are going to have a rough Thursday trying to keep the clan from coming to blows over all the chaos that is enveloping our country with wanton illegal immigration, rampant inflation, 'woke' indoctrination, racial conflicts, brazen retail theft and street crime, gender brainwashing, governmental abuse and unrelenting lying by our elected leaders and our media.

What's an ordinary American family to do? Should we appoint a designated referee at each table armed with a whistle and a cattle prod to quell any verbal jousting? Perhaps separating families into two tables; one for the Conservatives and one for the Progressives would solve the problem. Maybe two different serving times is the answer. Then there is the possibility of splitting up the groups into a *virtual* 'Zoom' dinner and a real one. We could also make Thanksgiving a two-day holiday; one for the traditionalists and one for the new-age Liberals. Another solution could be to set an empty place at the table and drape an American flag over the chair in honor of the millions who have died defending our liberties as a sobering reminder to would-be verbal combatants that it's not all about them.

America has real problems and one of the biggest is our unwillingness to listen to each other or to speak in modulated tones. Another is our selfishness, our lack of perspective and our inability to see things in a context that extends to before our own births. Recalling historical context has always been a leveling force and a way to truly inject some reality into a rhetorical conversation that is absent of historical facts. But when people choose to ignore their own history, attempt to hide it or whitewash it, we all suffer.

This will be the first Thanksgiving in 187 years that the statue of Thomas Jefferson will not stand guard at City Hall in New York City. His absence will be noted by many of us, but his words will live on. A few are worth remembering when we sit down to eat this Thanksgiving: "Nothing gives one person so much advantage over another as to remain always cool and unruffled under all circumstances." Happy *Thinksgiving*.

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