

GIVING THANKS for the GIFT of OUR COUNTRY

“ Proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all the inhabitants thereof”

- Leviticus 25:10 Inscription on the Liberty Bell



Let us pause and remember that our God has pitched His tent among us.

We are always aware of His abiding presence with us.

In the name of God our Father Who is Creator,
and Jesus the Son Who is our Brother and Savior,
and the Holy Spirit Who continually calls us to life and to holiness.
All glory and honor be Yours now and forever. Amen.



Let us swear allegiance to a land that's free,
Let us all be grateful for a land so fair,
As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer:
God Bless America.

Land that I love

Stand beside her, and guide her
Thru the night with a light from above.
From the mountains, to the prairies ,
To the oceans, white with foam
God bless America



The Dignity of Peoples

The power You give us is overwhelming!

But are we good stewards?

Or does our comfort, our convenience,
our apathy, our greed interfere?

Do we practice dominion over other people
by their ethnicity, their work, their ability?

Are we good stewards of the land, air, water
and all that lives there?

Do we treat properly the animals
entrusted to our care?

**You set us above all the other earthly creatures, O God,
when You gave us a conscience
to choose right and wrong.
You really took a chance, God,
when You gave us a free will.
It is by Your good grace
that we are citizens of this great country.
Much has been given to us.
Much is expected of us.
May we be great stewards of the
many gifts and blessings that
You have bestowed upon us.
May we continually
work for peace in our world,
for justice for all,
for love of one another.
May we remove barriers
and tear down walls
and work for the good of one another
as daughters and sons of God.**

**God looked at everything created
And was very pleased.
O great God, are You still pleased?
Is Your greatness seen in our nation
and in our people and in our actions?**

**For all that has been, THANKS!
For all that will be, YES!**

**Let us pray:
Lord God, our country has struggled long and hard to be free
and to keep its freedom as a nation.
It has met with success and failure in trying to achieve its goals.
Let us take this holiday celebration
to ponder the strengths and weaknesses of our country.
May we always do our part to make it strong
and strive to eliminate its weaknesses:
in the social, political and economic arenas.
Teach us to meditate on the Laws of the Lord
which formed a vision for our founding fathers and mothers**

as they fashioned a new nation
where people might live as one.
May this message live on in our midst
as a task for people today
and a promise for tomorrow.
Thank You for Your past blessings
and for all that we will achieve in the future
with Your Divine help. Amen.

Hebrews 11:8-16

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old— and Sarah herself was barren— because he considered Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.”

All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, He has prepared a city for them.

Prayers of Intercession

For all the Native American peoples who sacrificed and suffered.
May You, O Great Spirit, reward them and bless them for suffering unjust persecution and dishonest dealings at the hands of our ancestors.

For all men, women and children who were captured and sold into slavery only to lead miserable and inhumane lives for the profit of others.
Merciful Lord, heal the woundedness of our oppressed brothers and sisters who even today still feel the effects of this tragedy.

For all immigrants who suffered discrimination at the hands of others.
Help us Lord to eradicate prejudice and bigotry even now in our country and our world. Let us treat each other with dignity and respect.

For the many natural resources of our nation and our people, we give thanks. Creative God, help us to use our gifts and our giftedness to build up Your Kingdom here in our country and in our world.

For all peoples and nations that we will work together to alleviate hunger, poverty, disease, ignorance and exploitation.

Lord of all peoples, instill in us a deeper appreciation that we are all made in the image and likeness of You.

For the leaders of all nations but most especially the rich nations of the world, that they will take the lead in being good stewards of the power, the economic and political resources at their disposal to change our world for the better.

Spirit of God, turn their hearts from hearts of stone to hearts of flesh. Let them be moved by truly Godly concerns for all peoples.

Let us pray:

O God of celebration and joy, peace and freedom, let all peoples know the joys and freedoms we know. Hear our prayers this day and answer them as only You know best for us. Help us to always be appreciative for Your many gifts freely given and blessings to us . May we continually celebrate them with our brothers and sisters around the world. Amen.

Reflection: Learned Hand

“The spirit of liberty is the spirit which is not too sure that it is right; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which seeks to understand the minds of other men and women; the spirit of liberty is the spirit which weighs their interests alongside its own without bias; the spirit of liberty remembers that not even a sparrow falls to earth unheeded; the spirit of liberty is the spirit of Him who, near two thousand years ago, taught mankind that lesson it has never learned, but has never quite forgotten; that there may be a kingdom where the least shall be heard and considered side by side with the greatest. And now in that spirit, that spirit of an America which has never been, and which may never be; nay, which never will be except as the conscience and courage of Americans create it; yet in the spirit of that America which lies hidden in some form in the aspirations of us all; in the spirit of that America for which our young people are at this moment fighting and dying; in that spirit of liberty and of America I ask you to rise and with me pledge our faith in the glorious destiny of our beloved country.”



**The Pledge of Allegiance
I pledge allegiance to the Flag,
of the United States of America
and to the Republic for which it stands,
One Nation, under God
Indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for All.**

A Brief History of the Pledge of Allegiance

The original Pledge of Allegiance, “I pledge allegiance to my flag and the Republic for which it stands — One nation indivisible — with liberty and justice for all,” was written in September of 1892 by Francis Bellamy for “The Youth’s Companion” magazine in Boston. The phrase was printed on leaflets and sent to schools throughout the United States.

The first organized use of the Pledge of Allegiance came on Oct. 12, 1892, when some 12 million American school children recited it to commemorate the 400-year anniversary of Columbus’ voyage.

In 1923, the first National Flag Conference in Washington D.C. voted to change the words “my flag” to “the Flag of the United States of America.”

Congress officially recognized the Pledge of Allegiance in 1942, but in 1943, the Supreme Court ruled that public school students could not be forced to recite it.

The words “under God” were added in 1954 by then President Eisenhower, who stated at the time, “In this way we are reaffirming the transcendence of religious faith in America’s heritage and future; in this way we shall constantly strengthen those spiritual weapons which forever will be our country’s most powerful resource in peace and war.”



**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to be grateful for all of God’s blessings to us.**

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!

