



From the desk of the CEO
Mario J. Paredes

November 21, 2018

GIVE THANKS ... AND FIND HAPPINESS

TO GIVE THANKS is an action that arises from our ability as humans to recognize the goodness and beauty in our lives, in our environments, in others, in all that is, all that we have, and all that happens.

Celebrations in which we give thanks have always been held in the most diverse communities, eras and cultures throughout the history of humanity. Here, in the United States of America, we have all grown up knowing and celebrating the historic feat in which, in the origins of this great Nation and specifically in the year 1623 in Plymouth (in the present-day state of Massachusetts) a meeting and a meal of thanksgiving took place for a good harvest. In the beginning, when the colony of Plymouth did not have enough food to feed half of its 102 settlers, natives of the Wampanoag tribe helped the pilgrims by giving them seeds and teaching them how to fish. The practice of carrying out a harvest festival did not become a regular tradition in New England until the late 1660s.

This Nation then has, in its historical foundations, a celebration of THANKSGIVING that has been commemorated from generation to generation and that has become the most important annual holiday for all American families.

It is a celebration, then, that commemorates the historical deeds that gave rise to the Nation we inhabit, in which we live, love, work, dream and hope. ... But it is, above all, a celebration - as its name indicates - in which we thank, give thanks, learn to give thanks, give thanks again. ...

Our current situation in society is defined and conditioned by a culture in which one must have money to be part of the world of the market, of the world of supply and demand, of materialism and consumerism; a world where you have what you buy, you have what you can have, what you deserve, what - through your labor and economic effort - you achieve and you get.

In this economic vision of the human being and of society, we are losing the ability to perceive in daily human existence the gift of life; the value of what cannot be bought or sold is lost; the value of intangibles like love, family, encounters, solidarity, friendship, kindness, etc., is being replaced by the value of things and objects, by tangibles, by the material and immediate, by the ephemeral, by the disposable and temporary.

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For this reason, THANKSGIVING DAY reminds us again of the importance of gratitude in the life of the human being, the urgency of being able to, again and every day, recognize the reasons we have to give thanks and be happy. Because the man who is able to give thanks is a happy man and he is happy when he is able to find and recognize in life the reasons to be grateful.

But THANKSGIVING DAY is not just a day for giving thanks. It must also be a day that pushes us to build reasons to continue to be grateful and to give thanks. It must be a national holiday in which we all commit ourselves to building a society in which we all have reasons to GIVE THANKS. In other words, it must be a day when there is not a single man or woman in the United States who does not find or does not have valid reasons to GIVE THANKS. And this is only possible if we all build better relationships, better family relationships, fairer economic relationships, more supportive political relationships, more humane cultural relationships, etc.

On this THANKSGIVING DAY 2018, I wish that all of us have reasons to be grateful and that, amongst us, we build a Nation in which during this holiday, this Nation's principal event, all who live here can celebrate with genuine reasons, and in fair, just, and humane conditions for GIVING THANKS. *Happy Thanksgiving!*