

By the President of the United States of America,
a Proclamation

Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and aid - and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by abstaining from their usual employments and avocations, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal mercies of Almighty God especially in affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness

Now therefore I do recommend and signify that on the 26th day of November next to be devoted to the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be - that we may then all unite in rendering unto him our praise and humble thanks - for his kind care and protection of the People of this Country previous to their becoming a Nation - for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his Providence, which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war - for the great degree of tranquility, union, and plenty which we have since enjoyed - for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted - for the virtuous and glorious example with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge, and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.

And that we may then unite in most humble prayer, for the preservation and perpetuation of the great and kind Father of the Nation, and direct him to prosper our national and other Transactions - to conduct all matters in public or private Affairs, to perform our present and relative duties, properly and punctually - to render our national government a blessing to all the People by constantly being a promoter of justice, and constitutional laws, sincerely and faithfully executed and obeyed - to protect and guard all foreigners and Nations especially such as are our Friends, Neighbors, and Allies - to give Peace, Unity, and government, peace, and concord - to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us - and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand at the City of New York, the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.

George Washington



Washington, George. The Writings of George Washington from Original manuscript Sources 1745-1799. 3 October 1789. The George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799. American Memory. Library of Congress. <<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mgw8&fileName=mgw8a/gwpage001.db&recNum=131>>

The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799. John C. Fitzpatrick, Editor.

[Note 77: A copy of this proclamation was sent to the executives of the States by the President in a brief form letter (October 3). This form is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.]

City of New York, October 3, 1789.

Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor, and Whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee⁷⁸ requested me "to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanks-giving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."

[Note 78: The Senate concurred in the House resolve to this effect, September 26.]

Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th. day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be. That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks, for his kind care and protection of the People of this country previous to their becoming a Nation, for the signal and manifold mercies, and the favorable interpositions of his providence, which we experienced in the course and conclusion of the late war, for the great degree of tranquillity, union, and plenty, which we have since enjoyed, for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted, for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge and in general for all the great and various favors which he hath been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions, to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually, to render our national government a blessing to all the People, by constantly being a government of wise, just and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed, to protect and guide all Sovereigns and Nations (especially such as have shown kindness unto us) and to bless them with good government, peace, and concord. To promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the encrease of science among them and Us, and generally to grant unto all Mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as he alone knows to be best.⁷⁹

[Note 79: From the original in the writing of William Jackson. It was signed by Washington, who had written in the day "third" in the date.

This was the first national Thanksgiving Day proclamation under the Constitution.]