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**Thanks be to you, O Lord**

*In October 1789, President George Washington declared his support for a day of "public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God."*
*Do you have a Thanksgiving blessing or prayer? What are you grateful for?*

I'm grateful that in the quagmire of present personal-to-global anxieties, there's nothing nobody is in charge of. That's one implication of GW's use of "*Almighty God*." So - another implication - GW decided he didn't have to be king of the U.S., and it would be OK for him to get back to farming. A third implication (and the explanation of GW's support for our national Thanksgiving Day): the fact that God is the "Almighty" source of all "signal favors" (specific blessings) should deliver us all from false pride, that curse of families, tribes, and nations.

And I'm grateful that, though my 93rd birthday is approaching and I'm almost blind, I have a computer and can write this.

Now, that's enough "I." Except that though I tried, I was uncomfortable writing a first-person "Thanksgiving blessing or prayer." "We" prayers are multi-person, public; but, said Jesus (in effect), "I" prayers are two-person (the pray-er and God), private. He added (again, in effect) that "I" prayers in public can't make it through the roof.

So, below, is a "we" prayer. "We" who? Humanity? Americans? No, it's in Christian language, and it's for any Christian assemblage (family, small group, congregation). But may others find some truth, and stirring to thanksgiving, in it; and the last section before the Name is not for Christians only. / The last sentence of each section begins with "For" and ends with all saying aloud, "*thanks be to you, O Lord*."

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O God, Creator and Governor of the universe, with thankful hearts we offer you this sacrifice of adoration and praise for life and for our lives together here and now - together to hallow your name and to pray for the full-coming of your kingdom, the doing of your will on earth as it is in heaven. For all this, [all]*thanks be to you, O Lord*.

Our Father, you provide for our needs, and call upon us to aid the needy. As we enjoy the fruits of the good earth, help us to keep it good, make it better, and prevent its becoming worse. Grant to those in authority a right judgment in all things pertaining to the common good. For these provisions and tasks, [all] *thanks be to you, O Lord*.

We confess, Holy Lord, that we have sinned against you, one another, and the good earth in what we have thought, said, and done and in what we have neglected to think, say, and do. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive others' sins. For the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, [all] *thanks be to you, O Lord*.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and our Savior, we thank you for coming to us as one of us, for suffering with and for us, and for rising from death to provide us with newness of life here and hereafter. We are grateful for your gift of the Holy Spirit to remind us of your commandments and to help us understand the Holy Scriptures. For all this, and your promise to be with us always and to come again in the fullness of time, [all] *thanks be to you, O Lord*.

King Eternal, we remember with gratitude those, living and dead, who have blessed our lives with love, knowledge, freedom, and hope. Grant us grace to honor them, and glorify you, with lives like theirs, conformed to your image in our Lord Jesus Christ. For this goodly heritage and hope, thanks be to you, O Lord.

Gracious God, we praise you that as water seeps into low places, your Spirit always and everywhere enters into humble hearts to make saints, into hurting lives to heal, into chaos to bring peace, into darkness to give light. Against all our resistances, aimlessness, and wanderings, you are determined to lead us to unity and joy in your Presence. For the Love that will not let us go and will not let us down, [all] *thanks be to you, O Lord*.

We offer this thanksgiving in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, [all] *Amen*.

**BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT  |  NOVEMBER 29, 2010; 2:53 PM ET**