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Canada’s Romanian Bishop Ioan Casian offers his reflections on Thanksgiving

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Canada’s Romanian Orthodox Bishop Ioan Casian published a message for the Canadian Thanksgiving, explaining gratitude and its connection with God.

Thanksgiving Day (French: Jour de l’Action de grâce) is an annual Canadian holiday and harvest festival, held on the second Monday in October, which celebrates the harvest and other blessings of the past year.

As the story goes, in 1578, English explorer Martin Frobisher and his crew gave thanks, and communion was observed, either on land at Frobisher Bay in present-day Nunavut or onboard a ship anchored there. The explorers dined on salt beef, biscuits, and mushy peas and gave thanks through Communion for their safe arrival in then Newfoundland. This is now accepted as the first “Canadian” Thanksgiving, forty-three years before the first “American” Thanksgiving.

“Gratitude is one of the many ways to address God. Through thanksgiving we acknowledge God as the Creator of the visible and invisible world; we acknowledge his care for us and the world; we also recognise his closeness and concrete and real presence in our lives,” noted the Romanian Bishop of Canada in his Thanksgiving message.

“Our gratitude comes precisely from this feeling of deep satisfaction that we have towards God’s work that we feel accomplished through the Holy Spirit.”

“Our thanksgiving is a personal prayer to God for the blessings bestowed upon our individual lives. Also, our thanksgiving is a prayer offered to God for our families, for the family we were born in, in which we saw the light of day and grew up. And not lastly, we give thanks for the people, society, and the world we live in, which is a gift of God.”

Bishop Ioan Casian highlighted that the Church teaches us to be grateful.

“Gratitude is the mark of true human nobility. Through thanksgiving, a Christian offers himself the right to otherness. Through thanksgiving, he keeps his personal

space open to God and his neighbour. Through thanksgiving, a Christian can communicate and acknowledge the contribution or permanent presence of God and neighbour in his life."

Bishop Ioan Casian pointed to prayer as "a way of hope for the better" in today's society.

"In a contemporary world in which we sometimes hardly recognize ourselves due to conflicts, contradictions, hatred, enmity, unhealthy competition, counter-values, the fight against life and the natural evidence of human historical experience, the prayer of thanksgiving is a way of hope, hope for the better, in humanity closer to God, one's neighbour and the world; humanity more responsible towards itself and the world of which it is a part; a man fully aware of his value and depth, a depth which has its source beyond himself in the image of God implanted in him."

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