

My Favorite Tradition

The fourth Thursday of every November, I rejoice with my family and friends in our appreciation for a successful autumn harvest and the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Colony oh-so-many years ago. Only I don't live on a farm, plantation, or anything remotely rural and I'm not a history buff. Thankfully (no pun intended), there are a boatload (no pun intended, again) of things more directly applicable to my life that I could be thankful for. Most obviously, a potluck consisting of: a golden-brown roasted turkey, potatoes in two varieties: creamy and mashed *or* starchy and sweet, glazed cranberry sauce, butternut squash, oozing baked brie, sweet corn-eating contests, warm apple cider, and pumpkin pie with vanilla bean ice cream. Flip on the TV, and I avail myself of a parade of floats and performers in the streets of NYC or to groundbreaking (no pun intended) tackles and plays in pro football. Just kidding. There are most definitely *so* many things I ought to be grateful for that are prerequisites to everything in this holiday scene that, without an occasion in which I'm off from school and gathered around the dining table, I would not be in recognizance of.

I aim to avoid bowing my head and clasping my hands as a token gesture before inhaling the spread before me, but rather as an authentic, evidentiary sign of my gratitude. I wing a prayer up to God, thanking Him for the tremendously perseverant and selfless parents He blessed me with. Without them, I would not be in existence. *My* opportunities and achievements are the fruits of *their* labor to leave India and settle in New York, and they choose to see them as nothing else. I check myself, by thinking about the grand scheme and remembering that considering my stable family structure, 1st- 27th amendment rights, education, home with running water and electricity, daily fulfillment of each of the five food groups, maybe not having enough allowance for the latest smartphone isn't *so* bad. Although reaching my goal of greater self-awareness, humility, and self-improvement is a year-long, life-long process, Thanksgiving Day marks a spot on the calendar where I am hopefully experiencing a growth spurt in that aspect of my development. And who doesn't like a growth spurt?