

No Holy Hour on Thursday
of this week.

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
November 20, 1956

Blood Donors still in
great demand. Sign up
at 117 Dillon.

An Early Thanksgiving Day

Many years ago in England, when "Good Queen Bess" was a little less than her fawning Spencer made her out to be, she directed her favorite ax-man, Walsingham, to scour the land clean of all Popish practices -- even the people of the Popish persuasion. In some quarters of the hinterland, however, feast days were fun; and the ax-man found it difficult to separate the villagers from their devotions. And so we find one Robert Herrick, Vicar of Devonshire, retaining an ancient practice in his parish, caring little that the new cult frowned upon it. He brought the fruits of the harvest from the neighboring fields to decorate the altar and the church. Then he and his parishoners offered praise and thanksgiving to Divine Providence. For this he was severely rebuked, and later ejected by the Puritans.

In view of this precedent, we were not at all surprised, last year, to find the good people of Millbury, Massachusetts, doing much the same thing. With Main street covered with snow, and pale smoke climbing from the dwellings -- like a cameo out of a Currier and Ives production -- the members of St. Bridget's church knelt in prayer to thank God for the sun, and the rain, and the wisdom of the seasons, and the bounty of the harvest. For the occasion, the church was decorated with fall flowers and berry bushes, and the produce of neighboring farms -- cauliflower, grapes, apples, corn, pumpkins, squash, potatoes and pears. The altar was adorned with dried corn stalks.

In the darkened church, members of the parish teen-age club marched in procession, and laid before the altar tokens of the harvest just gathered in the county. They even brought grapes and wheat as a symbol of the Eucharist. And with all this evidence of God's bountiful care, it wasn't hard to offer a prayer of thanks -- the reminders of His goodness were too many and too obvious.

For you, Thursday should serve as a reminder of God, and of a nation's dependence on Him. Our American Thanksgiving Day is decidedly not of pagan origin -- though you couldn't call it Catholic by any stretch of the imagination. And yet, the early Church had much poorer elements out of which to construct a Catholic feast. Indeed, there were times when she merely blessed popular customs and gave a new and Christian significance to them.

You should do the same with this day in your own life -- taking time out this Thursday to thank the Giver of all good gifts for His favors and blessings in your own life. Hence, go to Mass in your own hall chapel -- or to your parish church if you leave the campus. You can't do any better than that in the way of showing gratitude. Looking across the world today, and noting how much better off we are than virtually any other nation, you should find it easy to utter a prayer of thanks to God for His bountiful Providence to our nation and ourselves. You'll do this job best at Mass.

It would be more realistic if we followed the Robert Herrick and the Millbury routine -- but that's not necessary; our Mass and Communion will insure its being something more to us than merely "Turkey Day."

On Thursday -- Masses in your own hall chapels. No Masses in Sacred Heart Church.

In Dillon Chapel -- Confession and Communion until 9:30 only. These facilities are intended for those few who might not be able to get to Mass earlier.

PRAYERS - Deceased: Dave Hayes, '21, father of Martin, '52, David, '53 and Richard of Lyons. Ill: uncle of Jim O'Day of Howard; father of John Birney (O-C).