



CANADIAN THANKSGIVING

Canadian Thanksgiving is more connected to traditions of Europe where celebrations of harvest or thanks usually took place in October. The explorer Martin Frobisher landed in Newfoundland in 1578 and wanted to give thanks for his safe arrival to the New World. That means the first Thanksgiving in North America was celebrated in Canada 43 years before the pilgrims landed in Massachusetts.

For a few hundred years, Thanksgiving was celebrated in late October or early November. On January 31, 1957, Canadian Parliament announced that on the second Monday in October, Thanksgiving would be “a day of general thanksgiving to almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed.”

Other than the date our Thanksgiving is similar to the USA Thanksgiving. We love to get together with family, eat too much food and watch football or get outdoors for the last of the nice weather!

Isn't it ironic that at about the same time we are celebrating our bountiful harvest and eating huge meals that we celebrate World Food Day (October 16)! This is part of a global movement to end hunger around the world.

How can we, as members of the Catholic Church, end hunger? As disciples of Jesus we are called to minister to the poor both by means of Charity and Social Justice.

Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that “justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it” (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 6).

So, yes, we need to help feed those who are hungry but it doesn't end there. We also need to

advocate for the poor. We need to educate ourselves about food and hunger issues. Eat local or fair trade foods. Find out if there is an organization in your city or your church that you can help. Use the power of your pen to encourage our legislators to make changes.

This Thanksgiving don't just give thanks for your food, but also for those who work so others may have food.

IDEAS FOR YOUR FAMILY TIME

Thanksgiving is a time when many churches collect food for local food banks. Help your children find out about their local food bank and what they can do to help. Sadly, nearly every community has one or needs one. If your community doesn't have a food bank, check with the local schools to see if they know of any needy families. Another good place to give is local Universities - they are often full of students that don't have much money and so eating becomes secondary.

Your family could promote healthy habits by setting aside at least the first night of every week to have a healthy dinner. Find tips and recipes at Kids Cook Monday! (thekidscookmonday.org). You might even have your kids help prepare the meal!