



Boston Catholic Journal



NIHIL NISI IESUM

Dedicated to Mary, Mother of God

Salus Animarum Suprema Lex Esto (Canon Law 175)

The Salvation of Souls is the Supreme Law in the Church

The *First Thanksgiving* in America

was **This:**



The Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

REALLY!

NOT THIS:



The word “Eucharist” literally means **“Thanksgiving”** — it is the ecclesiastical Greek *eukharistia* or ‘thanksgiving’, from the Greek *eukharistos* for **“grateful”**.

What most Americans do *not* know — even Catholics, given our *impoverished* catechesis since Vatican II — is that what we today celebrate as *Thanksgiving* in America *was in fact the first Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the newly discovered America* in Saint Augustine, Florida on September 8, 1565. Noted Historian and Scholar, Dr. Michael Gannon (d. 2017), describes it as follows:

“When the first Spanish settlers landed in what is now St. Augustine on September 8, 1565, to build a settlement, *their first act was to hold a religious service to thank God for the safe arrival of the Spanish fleet ... After the Mass, Father Francisco Lopez, the Chaplain of the Spanish ships and the first pastor of St. Augustine, stipulated that the natives from the Timucua tribe be fed along with the Spanish settlers, including Don Pedro Menendez de Aviles, the leader of the expedition. It was the very first Thanksgiving and the first Thanksgiving meal in the United States.*” <https://aleteia.org/2016/11/22/the-first-thanksgiving-in-america-was-a-catholic-mass/>

This was 55 years before the Protestant Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and gave their Thanksgiving to God together with the Wampanoag Indians.

Geoffrey K. Mondello
Editor
Boston Catholic Journal



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