

What Really Matters

Written by Editors

Friday, 23 November 2012 00:00

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Thanksgiving for many this year may not resemble the iconic Norman Rockwell portrait. Instead, we still find ourselves with a slumping economy, unemployment in Baltimore remains stubbornly high and, although not as bad as in other states, home values in Baltimore and Prince George's County and other jurisdictions are terribly low.

So what, exactly, is there to be thankful for? We can use these difficult times as a reminder that we are not defined by the size of our house, the make of the car in the driveway or the latest iPhone we use.

What matters most, particularly in times of hardship, are the people in our lives, the quality of the time we can spend with them and the meaning and joy that being together can bring. And that, at its best, is what Thanksgiving is all about.

Families and friends gathered around a table, enjoying a meal, taking time to reflect on what they're most thankful for.

America's annual harvest festival is about the basics: the food we are lucky enough to eat, the family and friends we are lucky enough to be surrounded by, and the freedom we are lucky enough to enjoy.

Most holidays, religious or otherwise, encourage reflection and gratitude. But few of the biggies are as unencumbered and universal as Thanksgiving. There is no mass or church

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service to rush off to, no gifts to exchange, no religious differences to divide.

Sadly, we've begun to see Thanksgiving as simply the day before Black Friday and the gateway to our Christmas spending.

We must do a better job of reminding ourselves that pilgrims came to this country to escape religious persecution and were ultimately taught to survive the harsh elements of the new world by the indigenous Indians. They broke bread together as a way to celebrate their thankfulness.

At its best, this celebration can, even for just one day, dull the pain of this never-ending economic downturn, blunt the power of American commercialism and quiet the ugliness of our growing political divide. Thanksgiving can be used as a day to remind us what really matters—and for that, we all can be thankful!