



**PREAMBLE OF  
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

WE THE PEOPLE of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

“In accordance with Public Law No. 915, the President of the United States annually proclaims the Week of September 17-23 as Constitution Week ‘inviting the people of the United States to observe such week in schools, churches and other suitable places with appropriate ceremonies and activities.’”

## THE CONSTITUTION

*ADOPTED, September 17, 1787*

*RATIFIED, June 21, 1788*

*IN EFFECT, March 4, 1789*

The United States of America is a constitutional republic consisting of Federal and State governments. No powers of government can be exercised by any individual or group unless authorized by a written constitution, Federal or State, or laws enacted thereunder. Ours is a "government of laws, not of men."

"The Constitution of 1789 deserves the veneration with which Americans have been accustomed to regard it . . . it ranks above every other written constitution, for the excellence of its scheme, its adaptation to the circumstances of its people, the simplicity, brevity, and precision of its language, its judicious mixture of definiteness in principle with elasticity in details."

—*Lord Bryce*, famed English historian.

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## GRACE BEFORE MEALS

“That we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks . . . for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence . . . for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national One now lately instituted—for the civil religious liberty with which we are blessed and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and in general for the great and various favors which He hath been pleased to confer upon us.”

*George Washington*  
*The First Proclamation of Thanksgiving*  
*October 3, 1789*

## THE GRACE

The Grace on this card is taken from the original Presidential Thanksgiving Proclamation issued by George Washington on October 3, 1789. It was proclaimed in response to a Joint Congressional Resolution introduced by Elias Boudinot on September 25, 1789.

“Resolved, That a joint Committee of both Houses be directed to wait upon the President of the United States to request that he would recommend to the people of the United States a day of public Thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging, with grateful hearts, the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially a *constitution* of government for their safety and happiness.”

Complying with this resolution, on October 3, 1789, Washington issued the first Presidential Proclamation for a National day of Thanksgiving on Thursday, November 26. The original is in the Library of Congress.