"Remaining thankful, in spite of it all."

A good day to you and to each of my esteemed listeners! Welcome to EWTN's Open Line Tuesday edition. Barbara McGuigan here, alive and grateful for so many things! Our benevolent God never ceases to shower us with unconditional love, boundless mercy and peace beyond all understanding, even in the midst of terrible trials. His airwaves are open and here are the numbers to call...

In North America call 1-800-585-9396
Outside North America call 1-205-271-2985
Our email address is always Openline@ewtn.com

You and I, and those we love, have our crosses, struggles, grief and disappointments in this vale of tears. But even so, we know that our Good God has given each of us so much and has blessed us in so many ways. How wise the person who has the good sense to praise God in all things.

You've heard me say, "with thanks, appreciation and gratitude" more than a few times: Thanks being a polite response, a nicety, if you will, appreciation being more of an emotional investment in the goodness bestowed upon us, and gratitude is responding with, "I owe you one!" While praying for inspiration as to what God would have me give to you in this monologue today, I came upon President Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation given at the White House on October 3, 1863."

I was stunned by this document's recognition of the generosity of our Creator – and this even when brother was literally fighting brother. The proclamation also praises God, even in the midst of a Civil War that swept away practically an entire generation of American men and would devastate large areas of the South.

In this most tumultuous time in American history, President Lincoln's proclamation praised and thanked God for His Divine Providence, and directed its gaze away from that which was wrong and toward that which was right. It also showed gratitude at a moment in time when unbelievers would find very little to be thankful for.

Brothers and sisters, it's no secret that we're going through very tough times in America, but we must retain proper perspective. Some seem to believe we are living in end times, but every Christian community throughout history thought they were living in end times; even the apostles themselves thought Jesus was going to return in their lifetime. The truth is, we all face trials and tribulations on a daily basis, and some of us feel it's on an hourly basis, but we must keep our vision fixed on those many blessings that God gives us every second of the day. And that is why we see in Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving proclamation the audacity of grace and wisdom and courage to remain thankful and hopeful in spite of difficult circumstances.

This reminds me of something the late English Catholic mystic, artist and author Caryll Houselander wrote: "There is no grace in standing erect like a sapling on a calm afternoon. The merit comes in remaining standing when the winds blow violently." And might we not add, "Remaining thankful in spite of it all."

Let us ponder the following words of President Abraham Lincoln's eloquent proclamation, which asked that all Americans "set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens."

> **The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God.**
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> **In the midst of a civil war of unequaled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.**
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> **Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.**
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> **No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People.**
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> **I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions**

justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this Third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the Eighty-eighth.
By the President: Abraham Lincoln

My brothers and sisters, how many Americans today have become "habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God?" And although we are not in the midst of a civil war, are we not still fighting, brother against brother, in the greatest war of all time, with more casualties than all wars combined: the war on our unborn babies?

But in spite of this, can we not find in the depths of our souls a profound sense of gratitude for all those whom God has given us to fight alongside in this most noble fight in a most noble cause?

Firstly, for Holy Mother Church who never ceases to speak the truth about life and love, and for all her clergy who have the greater love to stand up when the winds blow violently and the barc of Peter is tossed in the turbulent seas; next for the entire Church Militant who fearlessly hunker down in the pro-life trenches; for those souls who brave the elements on the sidewalks outside the abortion mills in order to stand beneath the cross at Calvary in solidarity with the victims; for all those who pray, on both sides of the grille, and fast relentlessly and consistently for an end to abortion and all attacks against life; for those in the media who are committed to God's truth and courageously proclaim it, including EWTN and EWTN Global Catholic Radio; for those couples who are open to life and are living witnesses to the sanctity of life in the womb; for all women who choose life in difficult circumstances and for all women who have the courage to face the reality of the sin of abortion and are healed because of their courage; for all statesmen who refuse to compromise with evil; for all young people who have the heroic virtue to embrace the pro-life message and to shout it from the rooftops; in short, for all those "who are willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause" to quote a line in the song, "The Impossible Dream." For all these magnanimous souls, I praise God and I am filled with thanks, appreciation and gratitude on this Thanksgiving Day, 2010.

Brothers and sisters, what are you most thankful for this Thanksgiving? I look forward to your comments and questions. Here are the numbers: 1-800-585-9396 and 1-205-271-2985.

Closing: A thousand thank-yous for your calls and emails. Thanks, too, for EWTN and my producers of Open Line: Tom Graye, Elena Rodriguez and Mike Romano. You are all blessings.

Let us lift grateful hearts in prayer from our *Magnificat* Prayer Books for Thanksgiving Day:

> **You have blessed us with the gift of life: sustain through the generosity of your people all those whose lives are threatened by poverty, disease, violence or neglect. Your love is everlasting!**
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> **You have blessed us with the gift of faith: send courageous witnesses and vibrant teachers to inspire faith in all who doubt or disbelieve. Your love is everlasting!**
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> **You have blessed us with the gift of hope in a life beyond death: strike up the joyful hymns of heaven in all those who have died. Your love is everlasting!**

Until next week on Open Line, Blessed be God and may He mightily bless you! Happy Thanksgiving! Bye for now!

"The Impossible Dream"

To dream the impossible dream
To fight the unbeatable foe
To bear with unbearable sorrow
To run where the brave dare not go

To right the unrightable wrong
To love pure and chaste from afar
To try when your arms are too weary
To reach the unreachable star

Chorus:
This is my quest
To follow that star
No matter how hopeless
No matter how far
To fight for the right
Without question or pause
To be willing to march into Hell
For a heavenly cause

And I know if I'll only be true
To this glorious quest
That my heart will lie peaceful and calm
When I'm laid to my rest

And the world will be better for this
That one man, scorned and covered with scars
Still strove with his last ounce of courage
To reach the unreachable star