

curred. Moreover, experience has shown us that our actions must be based on sound science.

The 20th anniversary of the Clean Water Act marks an important milestone in the history of American environmental protection. However, just as water links each of our planet's ecosystems, water pollution recognizes no boundaries. All Americans and their representatives in all levels of government must work together to promote wise stewardship of this, our "water planet." We must also foster greater cooperation in the international community.

As an expression of our national commitment to these goals, the Congress, by Public Law 101-424, has designated 1992 as the "Year of Clean Water" and October 1992 as "Clean Water Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim 1992 as the Year of Clean Water and October 1992 as Clean Water Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this year and month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities. I also ask my fellow Americans to join in setting examples of environmental stewardship in our daily lives.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6394 of December 16, 1991

Year of Thanksgiving for the Blessings of Liberty, 1991

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Thomas Jefferson once noted that the only firm basis of a nation's liberties is the "conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are . . . the gift of God." By observing the bicentennial of our Bill of Rights as a Year of Thanksgiving for the Blessings of Liberty, we not only give honor where it is due but also reaffirm the moral and spiritual foundation on which this great Republic rests.

Our Nation's Founders were men of faith and conviction, and it was a biblically inspired view of man that led them to declare "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The ratification of our Bill of Rights in December 1791 signalled their determination to uphold in law these timeless words from our Declaration of Independence.

Our Bill of Rights guarantees, among other basic liberties, freedom of speech and of the press, as well as freedom of religion and association; it recognizes the right to keep and bear arms; and it prohibits unreasonable search and seizure of a person's home, papers, or possessions. The Bill of Rights also states that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, and it establishes funda-

mental rules of fairness in judicial proceedings, including the right to trial by jury. Two hundred years after its ratification, this extraordinary document is recognized around the world as the great charter of American liberty and democracy. Indeed, as James Madison predicted, the principles enshrined in our Bill of Rights have become for all peoples "fundamental maxims of free government."

Our ancestors fully recognized the value of freedom, and on September 26, 1789, just one day after they agreed on a draft Bill of Rights to be presented to the States for ratification, members of the First Congress requested that President Washington "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." Washington, who had favored and even encouraged the observance of such a day, readily issued a proclamation calling upon all Americans to unite in thanksgiving "for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed"

President Washington's call for a national day of Thanksgiving came less than two decades after our Declaration of Independence—and two years before the ratification of our Bill of Rights. How much greater reason do we have now, more than 200 years later, to give thanks! The fledgling republic led by George Washington has not only endured but prospered. Today we can be thankful for the very fact that we have maintained our Constitution and Bill of Rights throughout our Nation's history and for the expansion of freedom and democratic ideals around the world. Today we are also grateful for those brave Americans, past and present, who have been willing to put themselves in harm's way to defend the lives and liberty of others.

On this wonderful occasion, recalling the words of our first President, let us give thanks for the blessings of liberty, and let us strive—both as individuals and as a Nation—to remain worthy of them, always using our freedom in accordance with the will of that "great and glorious Being" who has so graciously granted and preserved it.

The Congress, by Public Law 101-570, has designated 1991 as a "Year of Thanksgiving for the Blessings of Liberty" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this year.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby urge all Americans to join in observing 1991 as a Year of Thanksgiving for the Blessings of Liberty. Let us show through word and deed—including public and private prayer—that we are grateful for our God-given freedom and for the many other blessings that He has bestowed on us as individuals and as a Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH