

Gratitude in the Month of November in Seattle

Karilee Aoki

November 20, 2021

Hyun Jin Moon's Family Peace Association



This year, November has arrived in full Seattle fashion - grey skies with a 100% chance of rain. We had many more puddles and more squishy lawns around than anyone expected. But I was so grateful. After a long scorching summer of drought and high water bills, I was very happy to see that glorious rain finally coming down, turning everything green once again.

There was more I was grateful for. On Veterans Day, our family had the opportunity to attend a local Veterans Day flag-placing ceremony, honoring all the brave souls who chose to give their service and even make the ultimate sacrifice to protect our country's God-given fundamental values and freedoms. It was cold and drizzly as I gathered my kids from their beds and drove them down that morning to the Evergreen Washelli Cemetery. It was our first time visiting such a place together, and my kids looked around in wonder with many questions and excitement. After we received the single

American flag they had left, we found the name of a veteran who had served in the Korean War and honored him.



When the commemorative ceremony began later on, I was surprised when I became emotional hearing the bagpipes playing "Amazing Grace." I was thinking about how so many men and women who came before us gave so much, believing to the depths of their souls that they could offer a better future to us who were standing there. One of my sons saw the tears streaming down my cheek and asked me, "Mama, why are you crying?" I replied, "Don't worry. These are happy and proud tears." As a woman who was born and raised in America and had the privilege to see many things while living abroad in developing countries during my teen years, I feel very grateful to come from a nation that is still fighting to uplift the God-given fundamental rights and freedoms of Americans as well as others around the world.

November is also the month of Thanksgiving. It is a time when families stop to reflect and give thanks for all the blessings God has given to us individually, but also as a family, community, and nation. We are reminded every year of the miraculous story of how this country began. The first men, women and children crossed the treacherous Atlantic Ocean to come to an unknown land, knowing they were risking a lot. It was from sheer determination and an unbreakable faith that they were able to face fear and uncertainty straight in the eyes, saying, "We are willing to give our lives to find a place to worship God freely." Perhaps God was moved and wanted to make sure they would find a way to prosper and spread His truth and love in this new land of opportunity. Although America is currently being faced with huge challenges of identity and values, brave families all across this nation are once again beginning to step up and speak out about God's truth, love and the fundamental rights and freedoms that we all are proud of.



From these examples and more, I am grateful for this month because of the reminders November gives to have gratitude - personally, as a family, and as a nation. As we come closer to closing out this crazy year of 2021, I am grateful I can choose gratitude for all the lessons, even the hard ones, and deeper reflections that God could show my family and me. Our cup can always be half-full, if we choose to see it that way.