

Commonwealth of



1863
Massachusetts.

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

JOHN A. ANDREW,

GOVERNOR:

A PROCLAMATION

FOR A DAY OF

FASTING, HUMILIATION AND PRAYER.

By and with the advice and consent of the COUNCIL, I do hereby appoint THURSDAY, the second day of APRIL next, to be kept and observed by the People of Massachusetts, as a day of public FASTING, HUMILIATION, and PRAYER.

The venerable example of our fathers, by whom this annual religious observance was established in our Commonwealth, invites us to maintain its fit solemnity. But much more does a due sense of human dependence, unworthiness, and shortcoming, summon us, as a people, not less than as individuals, in a spirit of humility, self-denial, and supplication, to bow before the Infinite Ruler of all the Earth. Recalling our minds from every vain pursuit, from the desires of ambition and gain, from the contemplation of ourselves and all private and personal objects or ends, let the occasion be consecrated by penitential confession, by the purification of our hearts, and by the renewal and enlivening of our trust in God, who is the source of all Life and Help and Salvation.

Let our Fast be made acceptable before Him, by seeking to follow the great humility of Our Lord, whose Cross and Passion are especially commemorated by so many believers at this season of the revolving year; and by the fervent purposes of sincere hearts to conform the laws and the practices of our country, and to conform our life and conduct as a people, to the Gospel He taught and the spirit of His example upon earth.

Let us make a common supplication for all needful blessings upon the work of honorable industry, upon the seed-time and the harvest; that we may be made plenteous in every work of our hands, in the fruit of our cattle, and in the fruit of our land, for good; that the sea may yield up to us its hidden treasures, and the springs of the earth may not dry; that the poor may be saved from want, and the rich fulfil the duties of their stewardship; that the hand of labor may not be idle, nor the widow and the fatherless be neglected; that all the means of useful learning may be continued and enlarged, and that all tender and kindly influences may drop, as the rain, into all hearts, "distilling as the dew, as the small rain upon the herb, and as the showers upon the grass;" that God would comfort the sorrowing, strengthen the weak, encourage all who falter in the work of Duty, soften the griefs and bereavements of War, make clear the dim vision of all our unbelief, purify our Nation; that He would give Victory to our arms, Peace to our Country, and Liberty to all the people, "leading us in the way which is hewn out for the ransomed to walk in, where the vulture's eye never saw, and the lion's whelp never trod."

Given at the Council Chamber, in Boston, this twelfth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

JOHN A. ANDREW.

By His Excellency the Governor,
BY AND WITH THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE COUNCIL.

OLIVER WARNER, *Secretary.*

God Save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.