



## DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

### *A Thanksgiving Message*

### *For the Friends of Dialogue on Diversity*

November 24, 2010

Dialogue on Diversity joins its voice with the words issued on Thanksgiving Day by a host of organizations and spoken by eminent figures in public life as they extol the excellences of the celebration.

The plentiful and generally costly menu of the day is something of the contemporary symbol of this Day. But against this backdrop there is an acute consciousness of the lamentable and much to be complained of state of affairs in the city, the country, and the world (not to mention the state of one's own 401(k) fund) – all as a quick look at the newspapers will painfully detail. What then is left for the rendering of thanks? It is doubtless best to look about with a different spirit, in many ways detached, but, in the surely more important ways, a deeply energized spirit. The history one stands in, the patrimony of cultural and physical “infrastructure” (as one now says) – all afford the key to a proper gratitude. The chance to explore and profit by our own history of civic propriety, to enjoy an exceptional degree of comity within a deeply diverse population, and to be part of the ethos of polite skepticism for the conventional, when stability has become stodginess – together with a creative brio that seems forever to be opening new dimensions of prosperity and intellectual advance.

But whether resources are turned to good or ill depends very much on the choices to be made by the communities of the present. We may be duly thankful for the chance to be in on the show. In a unique way there is a sense of gratitude that we live in exciting times, and are endowed with the insight and energies to brighten the visage of the City on the Hill.

*And a Happy Thanksgiving to all.*