

Thoughts about Our Flag, Veterans Day, and MY America.

As we meet today under the protective folds of Old Glory and pause to pay tribute to it, let us reflect on its glorious history and contemplate the things for which it stands.

The Stars and Stripes was born over two-hundred years ago amid the first flames of Americas fight for freedom. She has seen the transition from horses pulling carriages over cobblestone streets to silver jets streaking across wide blue skies. She has traveled from New York to San Francisco, from Chicago to New Orleans, across every sea and across every continent. Her pride has been unfurled on sailing ships, steamers and mighty vessels of armed power to bring peace and freedom to oppressed people throughout the world. She has soared on the tip of a mighty Saturn rocket with blazing engines through the silent seas of space until she stood proudly on the gray surface of the moon.

She was in the hands of our first President in the blood and snow at Valley Forge and was there when our Nation was born with a wilderness at her back and seas at her sides, and not one friendly neighbor on whom she could call for help.

She has been the inspiration for untold millions, many of whom have followed her into battle so that we might continue to enjoy the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness which have been granted to every American as the heritage of free men.

I wonder what America would be like today without the sacrifice of those who loved their country more than themselves and mercy more than life. These people gave us a great gift, so how do we show our gratitude? By erecting statues? Statues are impressive, but they end up mainly being tourist attractions, and recently the statues placed by previous generations have been slandered, toppled or destroyed. Placing a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a nice gesture but eventually the wreath withers and is forgotten. Speeches are good, but they vanish almost as the words are spoken. Let us look to the Bible in the First Epistle of John, chapter 3 verse 18 for the answer:

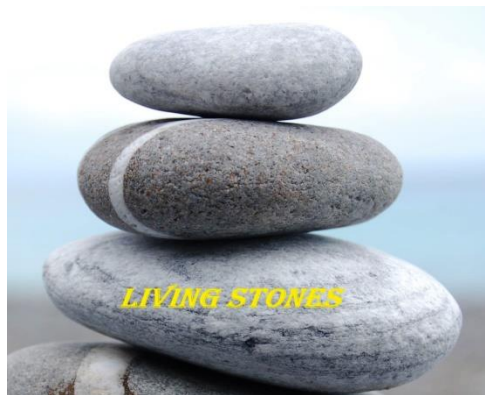
‘Let us not love in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth’. So how do we love in deed and truth? We can live lives dedicated to the faithful, intelligent use of our freedom symbolized by our flag.

Above all else, in gratitude to God and to all who have given so much, we must have a real concept of one nation under God, united in defense of truth and the American Dream so that America might have a new birth of freedom. To accomplish this rebirth, we pass the Red, White and Blue to our younger generation with the admonition of our late President John F. Kennedy: ‘Let the word go forth from this time and place to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans’.

Let every nation know whether it wishes us well or ill that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty. Now the trumpet summons us again not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need, not as a call to battle, though embattled we are, but as a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.

Let us pledge our loyalty to this great flag that expresses the will of a free people. Let us be obedient to everything it represents; our country's laws, our constitutional authority, a recognition of the right of every human being to the enjoyment of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Let us remember that when we pledge allegiance to our flag, that we are honoring and saying thanks to every man, woman and child who has suffered and died directly or indirectly for our country which has been made great by their sacrifice. Remember and thank those who proudly serve in our military, be thankful for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, and pray for those who are now serving. Let us preserve and defend this grand old flag at home and abroad and thereby bequeath a priceless heritage to generations of Americans yet unborn.



Living Stones - Masonic Thoughts for Today's Mason
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