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2020-2021 TEXAS SUPPLEMENT

Greetings Sir Knights,

As our great country continues to be ravaged by the Coronavirus pandemic, we strive to continue on with our lives in the most normal way possible. **By now, the Grand Commandery of Texas Online Grand Conclave has concluded perhaps one of the most unusual Grand Conclaves in its history.** *(Without the usual pomp and circumstance, personal contact and fraternization to which we are accustomed during this annual event)*

While certainly not the ideal context for such an affair, through the sensible guidance and cooperation between the Grand Encampment and Grand Commandery, and with the understanding of the Sir Knights of Texas, we were able to overcome the obstacles thrown in our path, and have completed the tasks set before us to the best of our abilities.

This month, **we celebrate the single most important event in our country's history, the birth of the United States of America through the signing and publication of the Declaration of Independence. This event officially kicked off the American Revolution that ultimately led to the creation of the greatest, strongest, most innovative country in the world.** Largely considered to be established on Judeo-Christian principles, it is difficult to deny the influence of Freemasonry in the creation of the United States.

It is said that **one of the main goals of Freemasonry is to make good men better, yet it is the influence of many of these particular men that contributed to the ideals and behaviors that led to the birth of our nation.** When we examine our founding documents, we realize that many of the developers and signers were established Freemasons, or heavily influenced by them. Perhaps up to one third of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were Masons.

Among **these great Masonic influencers were Hancock, Franklin, Madison, Adams, etc., and the premier, of course, being the father of our country, Brother George Washington.** Brother Washington's love for the fraternity has been well-established, both in his personal life, and his life in the service of our country, before and after its establishment. The Marquis de Lafayette, a brother Mason and perhaps one of our greatest revolutionary allies, was a personal confidante of Washington.

It is well-known that most of the commanders of the Continental Army were Masons and members of military lodges. General Lafayette informed that **Washington "never willingly gave independent command to officers who were not Freemasons."**

It is believed that due to Washington's involvement and leadership in the fraternity, and because he surrounded himself with officers and enlisted men who were also members of the craft, Washington felt that our military secrets were as safe as they could possibly be, considering his faith in the principle tenets and influence of masonic teachings.

Ironically, Brother Washington was, in fact, not a signer of our premier founding document.

Brother John Hancock served multiple times as President of the Continental Congress, and was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence, defying and denying the authority of King George III over our fledgling nation. Brother Benjamin Franklin, at the signing of the document, famously quipped, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately," perhaps an apt metaphor for the struggles we face today.

As further evidence of Masonic influence on our country's establishment, we may look to the basic philosophies of the craft:

- ✿ Fatherhood of God
- ✿ Brotherhood of Man
- ✿ Relief of our fellow human beings
- ✿ All Mighty Power of Truth.

At the time of the Revolution, we certainly didn't see much evidence of these revolutionaries advancing the peaceful and loving teachings of Christ, or the agenda of any particular church or religion, just the desire to set themselves free from tyranny and oppression, at almost any cost. The vast rule of royalty and aristocracy had no place in our new nation, where our Founders established the freedoms we now enjoy to this day.

We are a Nation of:
Religious Freedom
Free Speech
Free Assembly

The "4th of July" is not a holiday we celebrate in these United States. We celebrate Independence Day on July 4th, which as Freemasons should have a special significance for us.

So, as we enjoy the day off work, grill hamburgers and hot dogs, and shoot off fireworks by the ton (while practicing safe social distancing), **let us consider the influence our Fraternity has had on the founding of our Nation, which from day one has NEVER ceased being great, thanks to those original Revolutionaries and free thinkers who led the way, and to the countless and faceless sailors, soldiers and marines, many of whom were and are Freemasons, who to this day defend the freedoms our Masonic Forbearers created for us almost 250 years ago.**

God Bless you All, Stay Safe!

In His Service,

Gary H. Freedman, Grand Commander