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2020-2021 TEXAS SUPPLEMENT

Greetings, Sir Knights! There are only so many world-changing events that happen in one lifetime, some for the better, and some not so much. The event currently on the minds of most is the coronavirus pandemic that continues to linger, and within the space of a few months, as of the end of July has taken close to 160,000 American lives, including over 7000 Texans and almost 700,000 lives world-wide. This is no hoax, joke or propaganda, and does not discriminate by race, nationality, gender, politics or religion – it is very real, and the only way to defeat it is to be personally responsible in protecting those around us. We now have enough data to prove that masks and social distancing work, so please be considerate of the lives of those around you, and be sure to wear a mask when keeping your distance is not possible, and as always, practice good hygiene – wash your hands often and avoid touching your face.

While the pandemic is at the forefront of our minds, this month I would like everyone to reflect on another world-changing event – 9/11. Rarely can you define a particular event with two simple numbers, but almost everyone in the world understands this reference when spoken. I, as well as countless others, can remember vividly where I was and what I was doing when the planes hit, and took the lives of over 3000 innocent American civilians. It was devastating not only to me, but to the American psyche – for the first couple of hours following the attack. After the initial shock, I said to my wife, “the world is going to change forever today.” It did.

I pulled out my American flag and hung it in the window, then went to give blood, and soon found that millions of Americans all had the same things on their minds as did I. A singular moment in our country’s history, this act of terror was meant to strike fear into our hearts and minds, but instead led to the exponential swelling of national pride/patriotism, along with the simultaneous outpouring of brotherly love and charity. Occurring several years before I joined the masonic fraternity/Knights Templar, but in retrospect, the American response was reminiscent to me of the daily acts of our fraternity. Now, while the coronavirus pandemic has put a damper on many fraternal activities, we still seek to proliferate the principle tenets The Order.



Charity, Moderation, Industry, Humility, Truth, Zeal, and Faith: all qualities we seek not only to promote through our masonic activities, but also to embody in our own thoughts and actions. Practice what you preach, treat your neighbor as yourself, be a part of the solution – perhaps all of these sayings are cliché to most people, but they have very real meaning to us as Christian masons. If we are to live up to the true purposes of masonry, we must embrace these concepts applying them to our daily lives as an example not only to the profane, but to our fellow masons and Sir Knights as well.

The psychological effects of 9/11 and COVID-19, both being major catastrophes, have evolved much differently in the United States. While the attacks on the Twin Towers seemed to have brought the country together in unity, in our current hyper-polarized political environment, the coronavirus appears ironically to have had the opposite effect on the American people. I pray that we, as Christian masons, are able to see past partisanship and continue our good works without prejudice, and for the greater glory of God. I believe that this is why we are here, and one of the reasons I became a mason in the first place, to help me get past my own personal failings through the support and mentorship of men who have similar philosophies on life.

September 11th is now designated as Patriot Day in the United States. This is not a day of celebration, rather it is a day of remembrance, reflection and prayer for those whom we have lost abruptly and needlessly in the terror attacks of 9/11/01, and indeed a symbol for all those who have ever been lost to senseless attacks on American citizens. Unfortunately, these cowardly acts continue to this day, albeit so far not on the same scale as the 9/11 attacks, thanks largely to our massive military and intelligence infrastructures, who are doing their best to keep us all safe.

In remembrance of those we honor on September 11th, what can we do to make a difference in our country, especially in light of the current pandemic restrictions? While it may appear more difficult now to fulfill our potential to serve God and Man under these conditions, it is by no means impossible. Remembering our responsibility to safeguard the health and safety of those around us, we can still give blood, volunteer our services, donate to a good cause, and many other things that do not require us to maintain unnecessarily close personal contact. Learning from those already engaged in these activities, then ourselves being the example. Until we return to some degree of normality, which may be a while, we will do our best with what we have. Stay safe, and God bless!



In His Service,

Gary H. Freedman, Grand Commander

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