

YOUR FLAG

Hello, Remember me? Some people call me Old Glory, others call me the Star Spangled Banner, but whatever they call me, I am your flag, the flag of the United States of America.

Something has been bothering me, so I thought I might talk it over with you—because it is about you and me.

I remember some time ago, people would line up on both sides of the street to watch the parade, and naturally I was leading every one, proudly waving in the breeze.

When you daddy saw me coming, he immediately removed his hat and placed it against his left shoulder so that his hand was directly over his heart—remember?

And you, I remember, were standing there, straight as a soldier. You didn't have a hat, but you were giving the right salute. Remember your little sister? Not to be outdone, she was saluting the same as you with her right hand over her heart—remember?

What happened? I'm still the same old flag. Oh, I've added a few more stars since you were a boy, and a lot more blood has been shed since those parades of long ago.

But now, somehow I don't feel as proud as I used to feel. When I come down your street, you just stand there with your hands in your pockets. You may give me a small glance, and then look away. I see children running around you shouting they don't seem to know who I am.

I saw one man take his hat off, then he looked around, and when he didn't see anybody else take off his hat, he quickly put his on again.

Is it a sin to be patriotic today? Have you forgotten what I stand for, and where I have been? Anzio, Guadalcanal, Korea and Vietnam!

Take a look at the memorial honor rolls, and see the names of those patriotic Americans who gave their lives to keep this republic free. When you salute ME, you are actually saluting THEM.

Well, it won't be long until I'll be coming down your street again. So when you see me, please stand straight and place your hand over your heart, and I'll know that you remembered. I'll salute you by waving back!

OLD GLORY

"Old Glory" is a beautiful emblem of our Country. Its 50 stars and 13 stripes waving in the breeze will lift any patriot's heart, for this is our flag! We have had the honor of serving under it both in war and in peace. We are proud to have been in its protecting folds, to have seen its color raised high on foreign strands, and to have it always in our hearts.

Someone asked me recently, "How did you pledge allegiance to the flag in the Army? In what position did you stand?" I began to think about it and soon found that I did not remember ever doing it in the Army in my 22 years of service. Because we were sworn in at the time we entered, the pledge was not necessary. I also thought of the times in battle when the red, white, and blue was not in evidence, but the colors of battle were. In my first battle, in the Ardennes forest, the colors were the green of the dense evergreens, the white of the deep snow, and the red blood on its surface. Where was the flag then? It was in our hearts. It was part of us. We were the front line of the United States of America.

In the old Civil War movies that I watched as a youngster, I always admired the man who carried the banner into the fray. He was a target, but he was also the rallying point, and the morale of the regiment stood with him. When he went down, there was always another to pick up the banner and advance. It was a very visible symbol of the Republic for which it stands.

Today, we may not bring our flag into battle so directly, but it is always there in our hearts. So it is today. So it will be tomorrow and forever. Thank God for the banner that brings hope and liberty to the minds of all who live under it. And may it wave over land and sea for as long as it lives in our hearts as the symbol of God's gift to His children.

So, rally around the flag once again while the Colour Sergeant holds it aloft in spite of the shot and shell of battle or the darts and arrows of internal discord. It is our banner, the Star-Spangled Banner, Old Glory. Like you, I love it, and I will go the distance of my life for it again, and again, and again.

TRIBUTE TO OUR FLAG

The American flag is a symbol of everything that is good about our Country. Although special emphasis is given Old Glory on June 14, May 30 and November 11, every day should be flag day: a day for all citizens to show that we are proud to be Americans, thankful that we are Americans, and richly blessed to have the glorious privilege of living in America. What a priceless heritage has been left us by those who have lived in this land in days gone by! History tells us over and over again, of the dedication, the determination, the sacrifices, hardships and disappointments of our forebears. They persevered; they pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to build in this rugged land a new nation, founded on the basic principles of faith in God, freedom, justice, liberty, equality, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. May it never perish from the earth!

What can we do today to keep these wonderful blessings and privileges intact? How can we insure that all these qualities will be here for our children and their children after we are gone? What greater legacy can we leave them than one of liberty, justice, freedom and all the rest of those priceless attributes which make life in America so pleasant? Let us teach our children and grandchildren our history, our heritage, their heritage, and impress upon them not only the privilege of that heritage, but also the responsibility of perpetuating the American spirit. Today our Nation is faced with awesome challenges, but sometimes we don't or won't face up to them. We are too willing to enjoy the good life, to take all our many blessings for granted with no thought of tomorrow.

How can we secure our rightful place in the world, a position of self-respect and the respect of all responsible nations? We must realize that we cannot be Santa Claus to every other country, nor can we be policemen attempting to convert age-old customs and principles of foreign nations to our ways. But we should insist that every American understands our Nation's history, respects our government, and honors our glorious flag.

Let us have hope. Let us have faith. Let us ask God to sustain us for the good of all mankind. But let us also prepare. In the defense of our Nation there can be no second best! The time has come to say to every defeatist, to every detractor of this Country, to every flag burner, to every terrorist, to every appeaser, "Enough is enough. The United States of America is the greatest land on earth. There is more freedom here, there is more opportunity here, there is more hope here than in any other land. You will not destroy her!"

But let us concentrate on the positive. God built a continent of glory and filled it with treasures untold. Then he called a thousand peoples and summoned the bravest among them. They came from the ends of the earth, each bearing a gift, a faith, and a hope. The excitement of adventure was in their eyes; the glory of hope and faith was in their souls. Out of the labor and prayers of men, the bounty of earth, and the hopes of the world, God fashioned a nation in love, blessed it with a purpose sublime, and let it be called America.

And what an America it turned out to be! Where but in America do people have the freedom to do pretty much as they please? Where but in America can one travel from coast to coast and anywhere in between, with no one to stop him, or question him, or demand identification, or passes or visas? Were it not for the American flag there would be no freedom, no open gatherings of men of good will. That flag represents all that is good about America.

So the next time you see Old Glory waving majestically in the breeze, look at it reverently, thank God for it, and listen closely to its message of freedom and justice for all:

"Never let my enemies tear me down from my lofty position lest I never return. Keep alight the fires of patriotism; strive earnestly for the spirit of democracy; worship God and keep His Commandments. Then I shall remain the bulwark of peace and freedom for all mankind. I am your flag, the symbol of the spirit of America, the emblem for the entire world to see, the one common bond for all Americans. I am Old Glory!"

OUR FLAG

Today I saw a wondrous, peaceful sight,
It was our Flag showing strength and might,
As it waived from its staff for the world to see,
I thought of all the things it meant to me.

I knew it stood for this country-young in time,
Oh, but what a country beautiful and sublime.
The stars and stripes, so proud and so old,
Holding each one of us securely in its fold.

It has not always been treated with gentle care,
But to all of us who love it-it's always there.
Our flag may not be respected in all the world,
But it stands for freedom-wherever it's unfurled.

It has been fought and died for on land and sea,
This has provided freedom for you and me.
As long as Old Glory waves over this great land,

Our "Defenders of Freedom" will always have a plan.
-Alma Carter-

The Star Spangled Banner, the Star and Stripes, and Old Glory are the affectionate names given by Americans to our national flag. This flag has had the same basic design since it first appeared during the War of Independence in 1777. The only difference being the 13 stars in the blue canton, which represented the original 13 colonies that rebelled against British rule.

The red, white and blue of our national flag are contained in our Star also. The blue stands for fidelity; with fidelity, how could a great nation be brought into being and continue to exist? White has through the ages depicted loyalty. No nation, organization, or person can achieve greatness without it. Red signifies love. In our Order it stand for love for our fellowman. Was it not for the love of our nation that men have shed their blood and laid down their lives for our flag and all that it stands for? The red of our flag stands for the fervency of a great love that our nation might live. Let us not think of our flag only when we see it in our meetings or it passes in parades. Our flag symbolizes the fidelity and the courage of its defenders and the love and devotion of every patriotic American. Therefore, we should think of what our flag stands for often and defend it forever, that it may wave over the land of the free for generations to come.

As we salute the Flag of our Country with its beautiful colors of red, white and blue, may we realize it is the symbol of the heart, soul and spirit of America. May you, our beautiful banner, forever wave as a symbol of our highest hopes and be a constant reminder of those who have worked and died to give us the heritage we enjoy.

As you wave above us may we realize that only our lives can speak for you and give voice to your glory and beauty. We believe you were created with God's help and design, and that through our trust in God you will endure.

As you were created a symbol of freedom, we must strive to live so that freedom will endure. As you were created to wave over a land that offered refuge from tyranny and oppression, so must we know you are the symbol of Love and Service to all people, we must cultivate these qualities so that they will endure.

LET FREEDOM RING

FREEDOM! FREEDOM! The word confronts us every time we view the TV or turn the radio dial or read a newspaper. It enters into every serious and comprehensive conversation or discussion. It is synonymous with the words "Liberty and Rights." Two hundred years ago, great patriots envisioned for this nation new worth to human liberty and rights. They realized that freedom does not exist in being allowed to be the worst but the right to be the best. As a nation, the United States of America has witnessed other nations lose the fight for freedom and become embroiled in civil strife and destruction. What is this freedom, which is our dearest and most prized possessions?

Freedom is the right to think and speak without restriction or fear of recrimination. To live and associate with all persons, regardless of race and creed, in fellowship and cooperative effort for the good of all. To know tolerance and be afforded the opportunity to exemplify the "Golden Rule." To work and to change such work or place of work when deemed best. To enjoy sovereignty of man as opposed to the domination of state or federal government. To choose the government in fair and open elections. To rule by reason, not rule by force. To rely on and trust in the "Pledged Word" which lifts all to rightful stature when controlled by that intangible thing called honor. To worship God according to the dictate of conscience. To seek truth and escape the prejudice and hatred remonstrated by bigotry and demagoguery. To "Dream Dreams" and "See Visions" while working toward the fulfillment during a span of life on earth. THIS IS FREEDOM!

Among the millions of birthdays that occurred in the year 1976 throughout the world, none was more impressively unique than the bicentennial birthday of the United States of America. Unlike the proverbial actress this nation is proud to proclaim her true age. The two hundred plus years of existence have all passed as a democracy, under one type of government and one constitution. Only one other existing government, England, can boast of greater longevity. Russia, China, Japan, France, Germany, and Italy—all have changed their political structure so often they seem like youngsters compared to the United States of America. It is difficult to realize that so many birthdays have actually passed for this nation since democracy does not show age. Today, when reactionary and revolutionary systems of all types are running rampant over half of the entire globe, this nation in contrast seems even younger than ever for it still has the vitality and the strength that accompany youth.

The American Declaration of Independence was, and still is, a great symphony of human freedom, the revolutionary etude of all hopes and dreams of humanity. Never has mankind been deemed worthy of so many duties and responsibilities. Whatever may have been the conditions in the world—economic, atmospheric, emotional or pathological—any tragic moments of world history which have filled all lands with the wildest imaginable discord, has ultimately found the United States of America plunged into the midst of the confusion. From such experiences has emerged one obvious conclusion to this nation's people—the fact that the greatest immediate human need is international harmony—the synonym of peace. Sublime virtues cease to be abstractions when embodied into practical application. Such application has become the power to rally this nation into a loadstone to attract a whole peoples' confidence and a whole world's respect.

The wisdom of the founders of this great nation was unexcelled and has served as an inspiration for great numbers of renowned men and women in every decade since it's beginning. They had the uncanny foresight of seeking to build a nation upon a foundation of strong patriotism, unquestioned integrity, opportunities for all, high ideals and love of God. This nation's real strength lies in the character of its people and the moral and spiritual fiber and ties stemming from its roots. During the past two hundred plus years, the "unbeatable" valor of the men and women exhibited in action has declared its true patriotism and indomitable spirit. No words, written or spoken, can ever express the spirit of the United States of America.

It is a force that descended upon the Continental Congress and remained to guide when no human precedent could show a way. This spirit of patriotism is not belonging to a political party and voting for its candidates ... that is partisanship. It is not paying taxes to support the government ... that is discharging obligation for the privilege of security, freedom and liberty. It is not boasting of institutions that make for education and enlightenment--institutions which must be forever preserved. Patriotism is living the United States of America. Respecting her traditions, and honoring her people. Patriotism is the sum of the three great cardinal virtues--faith, hope and charity. Faith in the principles of the government, hope in the future of the nation, charity toward all and malice toward none in practice has rewarded this nation's people throughout its existence with FREEDOM. May our great nation, conceived in prayer for peace, bring new concepts of living to the peoples of the world.

GOD BLESS AMERICA and for her always LET FREEDOM RING!

Agnes Lee Howard, P.G.M.
June 1976

"THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER"

For more than a century the "Star Spangled Banner," written by Francis Scott Key in 1814, was sung as a popular patriotic air. In 1916 President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed it the National Anthem. On March 13, 1931, Congress designated it the National Anthem.

Francis Scott Key practiced law in Baltimore during the war of 1812. In 1814 one of Key's friends, Dr. Beanes, was held prisoner by the British aboard the ship "Minden" in Baltimore harbor. Key decided he would try to obtain his friend's release.

Carrying a flag of truce and a letter from President Madison, Key rowed out to the ship on September 13, 1814. His request for his friend's release was granted; but the men were detained on board because the British were about to bombard Ft. MCHENRY.

During the bombardment Key watched the "Stars and Stripes" flying over the fort. Darkness fell and he could no longer see the flag. But the fort kept on firing back at the British, and Key knew the American stronghold had not surrendered.

When daylight returned Key was over-joyed to see that "The Flag was still there." Taking an old envelope from his pocket he wrote the stirring opening words – "O, say can you see by the dawn's early light, what so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming, whose broad stripes and bright star, through the perilous fight, o'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming."

Key completed the verse after he returned to shore. His verse was published in the Baltimore American on September 21, 1814. It became popular immediately. Later the words were set to the English "Anacreon In Heaven." That is the tune we sing today.

J. T. Sanders, P.G.P.
July 1979

FREEDOM IS NOT FREE

I watched the flag pass by one day. It fluttered in the breeze.

A young Marine saluted it, and then he stood at ease.

I looked at him in uniform so young, so tall, so proud.

With hair cut square and eyes alert, he'd stand out in any crowd.

I thought how many men like him had fallen through the years.

How many died on foreign soil? How many mothers tears?

How many pilots planes shot down? How many died at sea?

How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?

No, freedom is not free.

I heard the sound of taps one night, when everything was still.

I listened to the bugler play and felt a sudden chill.

I wondered just how many times that taps has meant "Amen",

when a flag had draped a coffin of a brother or a friend.

I thought of all the children, of the mothers and the wives,

of fathers, sons and husbands with interrupted lives.

I thought about a graveyard at the bottom of the sea,

of unmarked graves in Arlington.

No. Freedom is not free.

Flag Dedication

Our most precious possession as a Nation is our Flag, for this is the emblem of our integrity among other nations, the symbol of our patriotism of our independence of our courageous founders, of our glorious past, and our firm hope for the future.

Our Flag is a beautiful Flag, with its red, white and blue. In our Order we find a special significance in its colors. White speaks of the Purity for which we should strive in conduct and government and the Loyalty we owe to our Country and our God. Red reminds us of the courage and sacrifice of our Nation's builders and of the Charity and Love demanded to us toward our fellow men. Blue reminds us of the clear blue of the sky and has always represented fidelity and dependability.

Whenever the Stars and Stripes is seen throughout the world, it is identified with the United States of America. Here at home, it has become a bond which draws millions from diverse backgrounds into one family whose aim is unity and brotherhood.

Let us labour, then, to be worthy of our proud heritage as a free people who find ourselves beneficiaries of a rich legacy left to us by staunch pioneers who had a vision of what this land could become.

Let us take our place among the Nations as one which stands proudly for fairness, for compassion, for the highest principles and above all, for truth. Let us search diligently for peace at home and around the world as a Fraternal Order; let us now re-dedicate ourselves. May we be led to hold the banner high, that we may exemplify its highest hopes by our actions as American citizens. And now, in the words of the Apostle, Paul, "Be alert, stand firm in the faith, be courageous and strong; and let everything you do be done in love."

It is a pleasure to be receiving and dedicating this new Flag as a part of the furnishings of this Chapter. This beautiful Flag will enhance the decor of our room and add to the pleasure of all who enjoy meeting here.

As we now entrust this gift of regalia into the care of our Trustees, we take a moment to remember with gratitude and appreciation the generosity of those who made this gift possible.

May we, as members, always be aware of this Flag's lesson of patriotism and adherence to our Christian faith. May it always occupy a position of honour in this place.

LET US PRAY - (Worthy Matron calls up the Chapter).

Our Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the gift we now receive, and for the devotion of those dedicated people who made it possible. We pray for our Chapter and its continued success as it takes its place in reaching our and serving this community. May each of us be worthy of all those things for which this Flag and our great Order stands for.

I now dedicate this Flag to the use of this Chapter and as a valued addition to our property and regalia.