



Grand Commandery Knights Templar Oregon



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Greetings, Sir Knights

I sat at my computer and tried to find a way to capture the message I wanted to deliver to you for the celebration of the founding of our country. Many versions of this were scrapped and started over. In our country currently we are divided and while my words may have reached some, others would find it too political or offensive. So how am I to capture a portion of so many of the oaths we have taken to reach this point? I turned back to my time as the editor of the Oregon Supplement of the Knights Templar Magazine and found an answer. This is from Sir Knight Paul A. Gehrman's July 2015 Message, and it rings as true today as it did then.



There is a difference between nationalism and patriotism, but the line is often blurry. One way of expressing this as George Orwell wrote "By 'patriotism' I mean devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people. Patriotism is of its nature defensive, both militarily and culturally. Nationalism, on the other hand, is inseparable from the desire for power. The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more power and more prestige, not for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality." Because of the great diversity of races and ideologies present in the United States and at the same time our countryman's belief in the tenets of our country, patriotism is a more appropriate direction for our thought.

As Masons we embrace the brotherhood of man and enjoy the friendship of all brothers of the craft no matter in what country they live or have their origins. As Americans we love our country, support freedom, democracy, and our countrymen. But these last are political in

nature, making patriotism closely akin to nationalism. The beauty of the United States of America is that we have more choices politically than many other countries. These choices are outlined in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

I would urge each of you to reread these important documents, think about them and what they mean now and what they have meant to previous generations. Our country has been through several wars; the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq, Afghanistan, and at this time in our country's history we have troops involved in a limited way in various countries. All of these men fought and continue to fight for our country's freedom. It may be in far off lands for reasons that don't seem immediately threatening, but attempts by tyrants, ideological or political doesn't matter, to limit the freedoms of other people will ultimately threaten our own country's freedoms.

It is easy to say a salute to the flag, or put up a banner, but this holiday deserves our thought and heartfelt appreciation for our country and the men who built this nation and our servicemen who defend it to this day.

I would only add to this that we have a duty to each other. When we are in a situation where we may disagree with each other to hold our words until they can be shared in private. The Asylum or public venues are not the time or place to air our differences. These are places where we put aside private issues for the good of the Commandery and an example of how we should live our private life. Too often we listen to the loudest voice in the room without weighing it against the weight of our obligations. What is voice but amplified air and it carries little weight, and our obligations carry a weight that cannot be laid aside.

In listening to the weather and fire forecasts for the summer, I would ask you to check in on our more senior Sir Knights. Their health may rely on resources that are readily available to you or your Sir Knights. If your folks are safe but you can lend assistance to those who are in danger, within limitations, then reach out to see what can be done.

I humbly thank you for the honor of serving you all this year.

Courteously,

Dale E. Imbleau, Grand Commander

