

Bishop's Letter for Memorial Day Observance 28 May 2018, Anno Domini (in the 242<sup>nd</sup> year of our Declaration of Independence)



**Bishop's Memorial Day Devotional Letter**  
Memorial Day 2018

*Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volleyed and thundered;  
Stormed at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of hell  
Rode the six hundred.*

Charge of the Light Brigade  
Alfred Lord Tennyson (1954)

In the days of horse drawn artillery and mounted cavalry, I believe the words of Tennyson in his famous poem above described the epitome of brazen and patriotic courage in the face of almost certain death. There was no question of the logic of the attack into the lines of an enemy of overwhelming numbers fortified behind breastworks of earth, and supported by a formidable array of artillery – only the unquestioned obedience of brave men in the profession of arms compelled them into that embrace of Hell.

I often wish that we had a similar poem of comparable grandeur to describe the courage and patriotic valor of our American and Allied forces upon the landing on the beaches of Normandy; or the terror of the Ardennes Forest break-through of German forces supported by the seeming invincible Tiger (Panzer) Tanks; or even the sacrificial courage of Captain William (Bill) Carpenter of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division calling in air strikes on his own position to save his company from an over-running North Vietnam

Force. As a result, his courage prevented his unit being encircled by the enemy though at high cost.



These events are only footnotes of distinction in the annals of American military history. In considering the heroes of combat, we might also remember the four chaplains who gave their own life preservers to men of the USS *Dorchester*, a transport ship sunk by German U-boats on February 3, 1943 – one Jewish, one Catholic, and two Protestant. We must engrave the memories of such men on the escutcheon and shield of the nation. Many of our best and brightest have passed from this earthly struggle to their reward. They are our stones of remembrance. We have graven their names in our hearts and upon our memorials. Their courage, in holding high the Light of the Liberty, has sustained and encouraged us to continue on the Field of Battle and to forsake not the Ancient Landmark with which the Lord of Hosts has entrusted us. Many of our veterans grow old, but their spirit is not diminished by any loss of hope or valor. They, and those whose passing we memorialize, are the lively stones always before our faces and the Face of our Lord.

This Memorial Day, please remember the cost of the civil freedoms we enjoy in a nation whose founding was surely by the Hand of God, a Lord who gave the greatest sacrifice of all for our Freedom – His only Begotten Son.