

Anglican Orthodox Church



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDING BISHOP

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Bishop's Letter for Memorial Day Observance 25 May 2020, Anno Domini (in the 244th year of our Declaration of Independence)



AND *I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.* (Psalm 119:45)

THE Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; ³ To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1-3)

In honored repose lie the bodies of our thousands of military men and women who have died in the cause of freedom and liberty. The shedding of blood has forever been the purchase of liberty for the blood of a principled citizenry is required to fertilize that Tree of Liberty in order that its fruits may be made a blessing to a people and nation.

There is no true liberty apart from a steadfast faith and reliance by the people upon God for those rights enumerated in our ancient National Landmark – the Declaration of Independence. Even more ancient, and the Well-Spring of Trust of that Declaration, is those truths and guarantees manifested in the Holy Scriptures and purchased by the Blood of our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, on a mount outside the gates of Jerusalem. The memorial of His death is observed by the Church on Good Friday, and closely following is the Memorial of His Resurrection on Easter Sunday. He purchased the kind of freedom for us of which no potentate can rightfully deprive us. Our Lord needs no grave marker for He could not be kept in the grave; however, our honored dead repose simply structured cemeteries from the Pacific Theater to Europe and many other locales around the world. Their markers need no embellishing comments – these died for our freedom, and we must remember the cost of that freedom we enjoy today. But if we forget the blood-costs of the lives of our patriotic defenders, that freedom becomes common and we unworthy to benefit from it.


Visiting the American Military Cemetery at Honiara, Guadalcanal (Solomon Islands), I was struck by the simplicity of the scene. The grounds are not so meticulously maintained as those associated with National Cemeteries at home. Perhaps this is due to a lack of exposure – I was the only person there on my visit. Several US Marine graves were also scattered in fields beyond the grounds with few, if any, markers to designate them as a military cemetery – but the markers all proclaimed in simple language that here lies a warrior who died in defence of a priceless gift of Liberty from God to us. Memorials are important. The memorial statuary of our nation proclaims WHO we are, and from WHENCE we have come. To demolish these would be a desecration on our National Escutcheon.

The Liberty Bell, at the time of our Declaration, echoed that proclamation of liberty from the ancient text: . . .*proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.* (Leviticus 25:10b)

A Godly people cannot be enslaved, for God will not allow it. But a nation who forgets her rights and responsibilities under the Banner of Freedom is not entitled to live free and will lose whatever freedoms were purchased by the sacrifice of better men and women.

My prayer is that God will not only continue to raise up men and women willing to bear the full measure of the cost of Liberty, but also a people of the national character to honor, support and show gratitude for such heroes.

The Anglican Orthodox Church Worldwide Communion



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