

REMEMBERING THOSE WHO SERVED

This is My commandment: love one another as I love you.
No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

John 15: 13-14



As we celebrate Memorial Day, an opportunity to take time to remember those who have given their lives for the benefit of others. The remembrance was first observed following the close of the Civil War when so many families were grieving the loss of their family members to this long and brutal war. Originally termed "Decoration Day" in 1868 by General John Logan the day was celebrated by laying wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery. The annual decoration of soldier's graves spread throughout the country, with most states participating by the end of World War 1 when the remembrance included soldiers of all wars. It was not until 1971 that a National Memorial Day was established by an act of Congress. Today we celebrate Memorial Day to remember the sacrifice of all of our soldiers who have fallen in the line of duty. We often include all branches of military service: Air Force, Army, Marines, Navy, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine. In the shadow of the attack upon the US on 9/11/01 we now tend to include those who have fallen in the line of duty on the domestic battleground of police and fire protection. Over a million dedicated American people have given their lives for the cause of peace and freedom since the founding of this country.

Presence of God

We pause and remember that we are continually in the holy presence of our loving God.

The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth.

Excerpt From The Gettysburg Address: Abraham Lincoln

We cannot dedicate -- we cannot consecrate -- we cannot hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Psalm 34: 13-23

Come, children, listen to Me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

Who among you loves life, takes delight in prosperous days?

Keep your tongue from evil, your lips from speaking lies.

Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

The Lord has eyes for the just and ears for their cry.
The Lord's face is against evildoers to wipe out their memory from the earth.
When the just cry out, the Lord hears and rescues them from all distress.
The Lord is close to the brokenhearted, saves those whose spirit is crushed.
Many are the troubles of the just, but the Lord delivers from them all.
God watches over all their bones; not a one shall be broken;
those who hate the just are condemned.
The Lord redeems loyal servants; no one is condemned whose refuge is God.

Thank You

Thank You to the men and women who serve their local communities and this great nation quietly, everyday. Our nation's fire service, law enforcement, and military personnel often go through their days without ever hearing a kind word of thanks, nor do they expect it. Their valuable and valiant service is deserving of our appreciation. We pray God's blessing and our gratitude to those who have served, those who are serving, and those who will serve in these most honorable capacities. THANK YOU for your part in keeping our families and nation secure and free.

Prayer

We take time today to uplift the heavy hearts
Of those for whom Memorial Day
Is more than a mere diversion?
But is, instead, a painful time of reflection, lamentation
And enduring bereavement.

This day we remember with compassion
Your sons and daughters who have lost their lives to war;
Incline us to honor their memory, dear Lord,
With a sincere pledge to seek peace
And nonviolent solutions to world conflict.

We pray for the safety of those entering military service,
And relief for the many returning from combat
With wounded bodies,
Or minds
Sickened by the sight and sounds of war.

Did You Know?

Many individuals are familiar with the symbolism of the red poppy. Worn in commemoration of American veterans, the cheerful, cherry-colored flowers are a traditional emblem. The tradition began with a poem *In Flanders Fields*, written by Lt. Col. John McCrae and published on December 8, 1915.. Still recognized today, the custom of placing poppies on your lapel is a silent way to say Thank You to soldiers everywhere.

Remember

Memorial Day is not about sales, picnics, beer, and cookouts. Enjoy the day, for those who died would want you to. Laugh, play, eat, and shop if you want to. But take a moment to remember and pray. May we honor all who have given their lives, and their families who were left behind. May God grant them peace.



May the spirit of Jesus live in our hearts.
Forever!