



The Hoosier Templar

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Ed Fodrea KCT, GC

Grand Prelate's Thanksgiving Message

Friends

By SK Dan Patterson

Grand Prelate

Once again, Thanksgiving Day is fast approaching and I would ask that each of you take a moment out of your busy schedule, sit down and ask yourself, "what are you most thankful for?" Some would say their health, others might say our freedom, or maybe even others might say their careers. These are all great reasons to be thankful. However, we often take for granted some of the simpler things such as our family and friendships. Friendship is God's gift to us. Without friends, life is a boring and lonely road to walk. When we lose a friend or family member we find out the true meaning of loss and pain.

As I reflect on Thanksgiving Day, I would have to say I am grateful that I am a Mason. I am grateful for my Masonic brothers who I have made lifelong lasting relationships with, and who have always been there to support me. Had it not been for this great Masonic fraternity my path may have never crossed with those of these individuals that I am now proud to call my brothers and my friends. Even if I had experienced a rough day at work, I could always be assured that after attending a Masonic function my spirits were lifted and by the end of the evening I seem to have forgotten about my rough day. Think of the many meetings, dinners, banquets and degree work that we have shared together with those brothers over the many years. Masonry to me is a lifelong journey, increasing in knowledge, the support of brotherly love and the search for further light. In our Masonic journey we all took an oath regarding saving a brother's life. It is written in John Chapter 15: **Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.** What a powerful message.

When I first became a Mason in 1997 I was very impressed with the hats, clothing and collars of the distinguished officers. The 33rd Degrees with their white hats. The Commandery in their Class-A uniforms, white gloves, swords and chapeaux, and the purple worn by Grand Lodge officers. I wondered at that

moment if someday I would ever be fortunate enough to be one of those distinguished brothers. At that time I was a young Master Mason and I watched with envy those older distinguished brothers, admiring the friendships and camaradery they all shared hoping one day that it would be myself sharing in those same friendships they were experiencing. Over my 25 years in Masonry I discovered that these men earned those titles and the opportunity to wear those hats with hard work and commitment. One doesn't learn Masonry in a day, a week or even a month. It takes a lifetime of dedication and the love of our gentle Craft.

I am additionally grateful for our senior brothers who seem to be a wealth of Masonic knowledge. We all know who I am talking about because each one of our Masonic bodies has such an individual who we can always turn to for questions or advice at a moment's notice. These brothers are always as eager to give their Masonic knowledge as we are eager to receive it. Friends come in all shapes and sizes: some old, some middle aged, and some young, but we all have one thing in common, we are all brothers in Masonry.

Yes, the friendships I have made in my search for further light over the years I will always cherish and could never be replaced. Imagine, if you will, if one of those close brothers to whom you have had the pleasure of sharing friendships with suddenly laid down his working tools and was now called to that Grand Asylum above. The final grain of sand has fallen from his hour glass, and our heavenly Father's outstretched hand welcomes him home. With our fallen brother we have walked the pilgrimage of life. Many of our Brothers have already experienced this difficult loss of close brothers. But we are comforted in the knowledge that they are now in the hands and care of our heavenly Father.

As we move forward, let us make the most of every day, lay aside our differences, and enjoy those lifelong friendships while we still have time. Remember that with each passing day, we ourselves our advancing toward that day when our labors will be complete. That day, when we shall lay down our sword and shield and pray that all that we have said and done in our journey through life has been pleasing to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That day, when we shall be called to the Celestial Lodge above and will be reunited with our brothers for eternity.

Happy Thanksgiving, my Brothers and Fraters.

Grand Commander's reply

By SK Ed Fodrea KCT

Grand Commander

Thank you Sir Knight Dan!

Your message is an inspiration to us all. Christine and I are praying everyone is able to celebrate Thanksgiving with those we most hold dear.

Happy Thanksgiving!