

Thoughts and Prayers of the Seasons – 2023

Just over two weeks ago we celebrated and observed Veterans Day and only a few days ago many of us got together with family and/or friends as we shared Thanksgiving Day. But are those the only times when we think about our Veterans or give Thanks for the Blessings that we have? I certainly hope not! I recognize that as Legionnaires, we Honor our Veterans and are Thankful for the sacrifices we, as Veterans ourselves, and our comrades and their families have made. That most certainly includes those many Veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice “For God and Country”. Every time we pass by an American Flag with the POW-Mia Flag directly below, we think of our Veterans and those who have yet to return home to their families and loved ones every day of the year. Of the over Eight Billion people on this planet, only a very small percentage can even Invision what we so often take for granted, and sometime abuse. Our delicate existence within our republic of our Constitution and Bill of Rights, that is based upon Gods precepts, is tested each and every day, and yet we persist. This existence under our Constitution which our forefathers looked to God for His guidance and principles have held us through so far. But, if we forget where those blessings come from and are not ever mindful of how close we may come to loosing those Blessings IF we cease to be Thankful to God and follow His guidance. NOT just on the fourth Thursday in November, but EVERY DAY of the year, as we should be for all Veterans, as well.

Now, let us look at another Blessing that God has given us that we celebrate this “Season”. I’m not talking about the traditional Turkey, “Happy *Holidays*”, “Black Friday”, “Cybur-Monday”, or any of the other commercial celebrations where we can get half-price on a pair of socks. Obviously I’m referring to the birth of Jesus Christ which we celebrate on Christmas Day. We aren’t just shopping for gifts for our family and friends. We are remembering the “Gift” that God gave us in His one and only Son, so that we will not perish but have everlasting life through Him. With that “Gift” and guidance, along with showing us how we can peacefully exist with our neighbors in happiness, we can be assured of His Grace and Mercy, if we look to and believe in Him and His Word. Is Christmas the only day of the year that we think about this? Again, NOT HARDLY! Just as we should be thankful in our thoughts, in our words, and in all we do, we not only remember our Veterans, try to be worthy of their sacrifices, but also give Thanks to God and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins, and for so many other gifts HE has given US - 24/7/365.

So not just for the “Season”, but ALWAYS let us keep in mind His words in the book of Galatians 5: 22-23: ***“But the fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control. Against such there is no law.”*** Verse 25 also tells us that ***“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”***

Finally, as we may go our sperate ways in this world, I can’t think of a more fitting Closing Prayer than this in our troubled world both personally, here and abroad, I Pray, as we enter the Christmas Season: ***Lord, grant us safe travels. Make us instruments of Your Peace, and we humbly ask for Your continued guidance in ways that will bless our missions of the American Legion and the United States of America. Help us as we seek Your ways to support our Veterans and our country. Where there is Hatred, let us sow Love; where there is injury, Pardon; where there is doubt, Faith; where the is Darkness, Light; where there is Sickness, Health; where there is sadness, Joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as To Console, to be loved as TO LOVE, to be cared for as To Care For Others; for it is in Giving that we Receive; it is in Pardoning that We Are Pardoned; it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. “Semper Paratus” (Always Ready). For God and Country. Amen.***