

Greetings filled with Love to you, My Sisters and Brothers.

The week we have just passed through felt even worse because of our isolation. All good people were horrified by the wanton disregard that caused the loss of a man's life. We were all further horrified by the wanton destruction of property. The dreams of good, hard-working people went up in smoke or out into the streets in the arms of looters. This is not my America. This is not the America any of us want.

I asked my parents, who were teens in the 60s, who had seen riots, protests and looting on the nightly news, what they thought of all this. Dada said that where he grew up there weren't "protests" – "Cowboys don't do all that. We had too much to do". Mom, who grew up in Albuquerque, had some memories of her Mother having trouble getting home from her job at UNM because of "protesters on Central." She also said she remembered only being part of one "Walk Out." As a Senior at Sandia High, protest "against the War" was called during the middle of one day. "Everyone just got up and walked out of classes, out of the buildings to mass out on the football field to "sit in". I got to the sidewalk and stopped and looked around at all my classmates. Some were laughing and talking. Some were chanting with fists raised with a voice on a bullhorn. Teachers were angry. The very air crackled with chaos. Not wanting to be part of that,

I turned around and went back to class. When I had sat down, some others came in too. After a few minutes, a voice in the back of the room asked that we all stop studying and say a prayer for the Military. In a choked voice, he asked for God to take care of our boys and bring them home safe. He didn't ask for the End of the War. He asked for the safety of those who were fighting as best they could to come home safe. I prayed too, and was glad I did. A week later, I found out that two of my brother's friends had died during the Tet Offensive. From then on, the War and every war since, has for me just boiled down to the people, the guys that fight for my freedom. Not the politics or the policies of the government."

I thought about what she had said. That is truly it: it is all about people, not politics. Every conflict and challenge we have ever faced, will ever face, will be handled by us as people. Each individual contact, each action of every one of us builds a solution to a challenge or creates a problem we will all have to deal with later. Those that are working hard for us – the military, the police, the first responders, the doctors and nurses, the researchers -- they are dealing with challenges for us. They need our prayers and support.



The injustice of inequality is truly something we all have to work on, as individuals and as a Society. But, just because one cop did a horrible deed does not mean all cops are horrible and unworthy of support – any more than the actions and rioting of some black people means that all black people are unworthy of social justice. The Mob Mentality and the Media leads us to believe what they want us to believe. Just as a mob mentality led kids of the 60s to believe it was right to disrupt daily life, destroy property and condemn all soldiers home fresh from VietNam as “baby killers” and unworthy of support.

The questions raised this week are deep and the actions were divisive, BUT we as a country, as Americans, can go beyond this. Fix this. Work this out.

As Eastern Stars and as Masons, we are leaders. Because of our beliefs, our tenets, and our practices we can help this country come out from the isolation of COVID and into a more just and righteous Land of Opportunity. We need to prepare ourselves to step up into leadership as individuals and as a group.

Let us all say a prayer for our law enforcement and first responders. Let us also all say a prayer for all those who are wrongly accused and under the yolk of oppression.

Let us all turn to our faith in our hours of trial, because Jesus said, “Come unto me all ye who are heavy laden and I will refresh you.”

With Love and Prayers for your safety and wellbeing,

Beth McKown
Associate Grand Matron