



For God and Country

OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

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January 3, 2012

SUBJECT: "Using Spiritual Gifts For God And Country"

Greetings,

The beginning of a new year fills us all with many hopes and aspirations. We reflect upon the events of the previous year and seek to find what can be changed to improve the results that we want to receive. It is good that we continue to seek to find ways to increase efforts to improve things which we may feel have already reached their peak.

During this last year, we have met so many challenges and achieved many successes. Although we may not have completed all of our personal goals, we should find some satisfaction in the efforts that we have made toward them. And therefore, we resolve to continue to work for those things not yet reached. I believe that God spiritually supports us in our work toward honest and righteous goals.

Traditionally, the American Legion chaplains set a theme for their term as chaplain. Looking back over my years as a legionnaire and the tasks and programs that I have been involved in, I found one central necessity – that is the necessity of the cooperation of individuals to accomplish many of our goals. Consequently, seeking the source of cooperation, I feel that it comes from the use of the spiritual gifts that are embedded within us. I feel that we as an organization always use our spiritual gifts for God and Country.

In supporting my theme of "Using Spiritual Gifts For God and Country", I decided to draw from the writings of the apostle Paul in his letters to the Greeks and Romans as he was seeking to counsel them about problems they were having in the church at Corinth and the church at Rome. Paul wrote to them about the selfish use of the spiritual gifts given to them by God. The twelfth chapter of First Corinthians discusses the spiritual gifts that we receive from God for service. The verses tell us that there are different kinds of spiritual gifts coming from the same spirit. There are different ways to serve the same Lord and we can each do different things. Yet, the same God works in all of us and helps in everything we do. The spirit has given us a special way of serving others.

God has put our bodies together in such a way that even the parts that seem the least important are valuable. He did this to make all parts of the body work together smoothly with each part of our body caring about the others. If one part of our body hurts, we hurt all over. If one part of our body is honored, the rest of the body will be honored too.

We, the legion family, without realizing it work together as suggested in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians and thereby accomplish much. I believe that our programs are successful because we are working together as a family—as one body in which all parts are interdependent on the other – the Auxiliary with its Juniors, the Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion with its Legion Riders – all using the spiritual gifts given to us by God.

As the founders of our organization defined its purposes, they also chose “*For God and Country*” as its motto. It seems reasonable that with pleasing God as our first goal, all the other goals can only be successful.

The harmony of work by our different facets, encouraged by the use of our spiritual gifts, is something that we may not think about consciously. The gifts are many and we cannot know what they all are. Paul was simply giving to the Greeks and Romans advice on how to deal with each other.

In the simplest of terms these gifts can be summarized as stated in the bible at Romans 13:9 -- “Love your neighbor as you love yourself”. Treating others as you would treat yourself would be a sure path to cooperation.

If while working toward our goals, we use these spiritual gifts, whether consciously or subconsciously, we will surely have success in our programs and continue to be recognized as a premier and respected organization.

During this year and the years to follow, I hope that we will continue “Using our Spiritual Gifts For God and Country”.

May God bless us in all of our endeavors.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald Sheriot". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Chaplain 2011-2012