

***“There is no good without sacrifice”***

That quote has always stuck with me. I have been looking for the source, but have not been successful. Still I think it's most appropriate as we come to Memorial Day 2011. In talking once to one of the members here at St. James, after the fourth of July, he mentioned how General Washington's troops passed by the church.

That got me to thinking, how many of those troops, convinced of the cause of the Revolutionary War sacrificed their lives for that cause? When the War of 1812 broke out, how many young men felt the need to serve, and then gave their lives in the cause?

One can go down the list to our present struggles in Iraq and Afghanistan, and reflect on the same question. I have no doubt that our church with a history dating back to 1750 probably had folks who were willing to serve in the various conflicts our nation had been part of, and some no doubt died.

These were human beings probably mostly young, with a future before them. Yet they saw past themselves to the greater good of the country and their fellow citizens. The loss of their lives must have been hard. When one surveys St. James Cemetery, it does not take too much imagination by one of the flag marked graves to imagine seeing a mom and dad that had lost their only son or daughter to one of our nation's conflicts. Maybe we can also see a young widow or widower with child in tow, sobbing because the love of his or her life and a loving father or mother is no more.

That is why Memorial Day is so important. It is not a “holiday” in honor of one person, but is in honor and respect of many, many who gave the ultimate price.

So take the time to thank God, and especially pray for those who have lost loved ones in battle. There is no greater price they could have paid so that you and I could live in this United States of America as free people.

We have a good and great country. It has come about, because, “there is no good with out sacrifice”.

On Saturday and Sunday we sang “America the Beautiful”. May this verse especially come to our hearts and minds for Memorial Day:

*O beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife,  
Who more than self their country loved  
And mercy more than life!  
America! America!  
May God thy gold refine  
Till all success be nobleness  
And every gain divine!*

Pr. John Van Haneghan