

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

PRAYER FOR PEACE

MEMORIAL DAY, MAY 26, 1975

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

At the height of the Civil War, President Lincoln proclaimed at a battlefield cemetery "that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain." Shortly after that tragic war, a day was set aside each year to honor those who gave their lives.

Over 100 years have passed since that simple but moving ceremony at Gettysburg. There have been many Memorial Days, and many more Americans have died in defense of what we believe in. As Thomas Paine said, "Those who would reap the blessings of freedom must... undergo the fatigue of supporting it." Today, because of the sacrifice and courage of American men and women, we are a free Nation at peace.

Let us dedicate ourselves today, and every day, to honoring those valiant Americans who died in service to their country. Let us gain strength from their sacrifice and devote ourselves to the peaceful pursuits which freedom allows and progress demands.

With faith in ourselves, future Memorial Days will find us still united in our purpose. Let us join together in working toward the greatest memorial we can construct for those who lay down their lives for us --- a peace so durable that there will be no need for further sacrifices.

In recognition of those Americans to whom we pay tribute today, the Congress, by joint resolution of May 11, 1950 (64 Stat. 158), has requested that the President issue a Proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe each Memorial Day as a day of prayer for permanent peace and to designate a period during that day when the people of the United States might unite in prayer.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate Memorial Day, Monday, May 26, 1975, as a day of prayer for permanent peace, and I designate the hour beginning in each locality at 11 o'clock in the morning of that day as a time to unite in prayer.

I urge all of America's news media to assist in this observance.

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I direct that the flag of the United States be flown at half-staff until noon on Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels of the Federal Government throughout the United States and all areas under its jurisdiction and control.

I also call upon the Governors of the fifty States, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and appropriate officials of all local units of government to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff on all public buildings during the customary forenoon period; and I request the people of the United States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the same period.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred ninety-ninth.

GERALD R. FORD

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