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**FEBRUARY 17, 1975**

**Office of the White House Press Secretary**

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**THE WHITE HOUSE**

**TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO BE DELIVERED UPON THE UNVEILING OF THE  
GERALD R. FORD MEDALLION PLAQUE**

**GEORGE WASHINGTON MASONIC NATIONAL MEMORIAL**

**Most worshipful Brother Ellis, most worshipful Brother Fowler, Grand Masters, and other officers of the fraternity, Brothers and friends:**

**The dedication of this medallion gives me great pleasure and is an honor that I will always cherish.**

**When I took my obligation as a Master Mason, I recalled the value my own father attached to the order. But I had no idea that I would ever be added to the company of the father of our country and twelve other members of the order who also served as Presidents of the United States.**

**Masonic principles -- internal, not external -- and our order's vision of duty to country and acceptance of God as Supreme Being and Guiding Light have sustained me during my years of government service. Today, especially, the guidelines by which I strive to become an upright man in Masonry give me personal strength. Masonic precepts can help America retain our inspiring aspirations while adapting to a new age.**

**It is apparent to me that the Supreme Architect has set out the duties each of us has to perform, and I have trusted in His will, with the knowledge that my trust is well-founded.**

**As our nation approaches its two hundredth anniversary, we live in challenging times.**

**It was almost two hundred years ago, in the darkest days of our war for independence, that George Washington answered a question that is asked today. The question is whether things are as bad as some say.**

**George Washington answered: "We should never despair, our situation before has been unpromising and has changed for the better, so I trust, it will again. If new difficulties arise, we must only put forth new exertions and proportion our efforts to the exigency of the times."**

**Let us today rededicate ourselves to new efforts -- as Masons and as Americans. Let us demonstrate our confidence in our beloved nation and a future that will flow from the glory of the past. When I think of the things right about America, I think of this order with its sense of duty to country, its esteem for brotherhood and traditional values, its spiritual high principles, and its humble acceptance of God as the Supreme Being.**

**Today, we honor our first President, who was also our first Masonic President.**

**In a letter in 1798 to the Grand Lodge of Maryland, Washington used some words that are now especially appropriate.**

**(MORE)**

Washington told the order that he "conceived it to be the indispensable duty of every American . . . to come forward in support of the government of his choice, and to give all the aid in his power towards maintaining that independence which we have so dearly purchased."

Such involvement by every American is as essential today as it was in George Washington's Day.

I express my thanks for this tribute. And I ask that we resolve together to honor George Washington and America by perpetuating the national heritage he engendered through the principles which guide our order: friendship, morality, and brotherly love.

I thank you.

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