

Joyful in Hope – 41 – May 4, 2020
(thoughts and ideas to encourage and challenge)

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.”
Romans 12:12

Greetings, Earthlings. Happy Star Wars Day. May the Fourth Be With You!

After those beautiful sunny days over the weekend, I suppose it's time to check in with reality and remind ourselves that we live on Michigan. Actually, highs in the 50's, is not that bad for this time of year.

This morning, I want to share with you the transcript of the message President Bush posted at the end of last week. Probably many of you have already seen/read it, but I really appreciated what he shared. It's been over 100 days since the first case of Covid-19 was reported in the United States. We are beginning to see a 'flattening of the curve' in some places, but I realize we have a long way to go. I hope these words encourage and challenge all of us to have courage and have faith and to be 'joyful in hope.'

***George W Bush:** This is a challenging and solemn time in the life of our nation and world. A remorseless invisible enemy threatens the elderly and vulnerable among us, a disease that can quickly take breath and life. Medical professionals are risking their own health for the health of others, and we're deeply grateful. Officials at every level are setting out the requirements of public health that protect us all, and we all need to do our part.*

The disease also threatens broader damage, harm to our sense of safety, security and community. The larger challenge we share is to confront an outbreak of fear and loneliness, and it is frustrating that many of the normal tools of compassion, a hug, a touch, can bring the opposite of the good we intend. In this case, we serve our neighbor by separating from them. We cannot allow physical separation to become emotional isolation. This requires us to be not only compassionate, but creative in our outreach, and people across the nation are using the tools of technology in the cause of solidarity.

In this type of testing we need to remember a few things. First, let us remember we have faced times of testing before. Following 9-11 I saw a great nation rise as one to honor the brave, to grieve with the grieving and to embrace unavoidable new duties, and I have no doubt, none at all, that this spirit of service and sacrifice is alive and well in America. Second, let us remember that empathy and simple kindness are essential powerful tools of national recovery. Even at an appropriate social distance, we can find ways to be present in the lives of others, to ease their anxiety and share their burdens. Third, let's remember that the suffering we experience as a nation does not fall evenly. In the days to come it will be especially important to care in practical ways for the elderly, the ill and the unemployed. Finally, let us remember how small our differences are in the face of this shared threat. In the final analysis, we are not partisan combatants, we are human beings, equally vulnerable and equally wonderful in the sight of God. We rise or fall together and we are determined to rise. God bless you all.

2 Reminders

The Greatest Commandments - If you have not yet participated in the virtual chorus that Mike and Lindsey McKiddy are creating, **you need to do so today**. Look on the Heritage Face Book page for details.

3 at 3:13 - I hope you'll join with thousands of others in the Metro area for 3 at 3:13, **three minutes of prayer for Detroit**, each day during the month of May at 3:13 PM.

I love you, Lord; you are my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior. My God is my rock, in whom I find protection.

He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.

Psalm 18:1-2