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National Patriotic Instructor

**Monthly Patriotic Instruction**  
**March, 2015**

In March, 1865, the end of the war was only a month away. On March 15, the Confederate congress met for the final time. The once formidable Army of Tennessee crumbled at the Battle of Bentonville, and at Fort Stedman, General Lee sacrificed almost 3,000 men he could not replace in a desperate attempt to break the Union siege lines around Richmond. For the Confederacy, the end was obvious.

March, for many Americans, is a month of giving things up. Lent and Passover are celebrated nationwide and around the world. As I observe the programs for Lent here at St. Francis Solanus Parish, I will be thinking of the tens of thousands of Catholics who served in the Civil War. Whether in the trenches around Richmond, the deep woods of North Carolina, or so many other places across the nation, what did they have left to give up?

One thing is definitely certain. They did not give up their loyalty, one of the “cardinal virtues” of our organization. The war was four years old, almost insurmountable hardships had occurred around the clock, every day, and yet for the soldiers, sailors, marines and cuttermen of the Union forces, loyalty to the nation was without question.

As we all contemplate what thing we should “give up” this month, let’s all make sure to remember the obligation we took when joining the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and renew our vow of loyalty to the United States and our Order. Take firm hold of an American flag and the sacred text appropriate for your faith, and recite the oath:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, in the presence of the Great Creator and witnessing members of this Camp,

Hereby voluntarily and solemnly pledge myself to support and defend the Government of the United States of America, to offer my life if need be to preserve the Flag from being lowered in defeat;

To always observe the day set aside by the Grand Army of the Republic as Memorial Day, sacred to the memory of the Union Soldiers and Sailors of 1861 to 1865 and do all in my power to persuade others to do the same;

To be faithful in all duties of citizenship, to be obedient to the law of the land, to obey the Constitution and Regulations of this Order, and to promote actively its objects and interests, always and everywhere;

So help me God.