



NATIONAL SOJOURNERS, INC.  
AMERICANISM PROGRAM RESOURCE SHEET  
PAT-01  
TOAST TO THE FLAG



**1. GENERAL:** The Flag holds a very special place in the hearts of all Sojourners, and this feeling finds no better expression than in the *Toast to the Flag*, a poem penned by John Daly. Sojourners are often called upon to offer the Toast which pays tribute to the RED, WHITE, and BLUE of our National Ensign as part of the patriotic openings of meetings and events. The recitation of this fundamental tribute to the Stars & Stripes in the form of a poem by our members awakens great feelings of patriotism in the hearts and minds of all who are within earshot and has become a hallmark Americanism Program of our Order.

John Daly’s poem has received many awards, been recited on the floor of Congress, and is recited at the opening of nearly every National Sojourner Chapter meeting. Mr. Daley, a patriot, served a brief tour in WWI and was not a Mason. An autographed copy of his poem is a treasured possession of the National Sojourners.

**2. DELIVERY GUIDELINES:** The Toast to the Flag should always be given from memory and not read. Delivery of the Toast in Heroes of '76 colonial attire is a plus. For variety, the toast may be presented by multiple Brethren each reciting a verse; by a Sojourners Lady; and by inviting all present to join in the recitation.

**3. USE OF A PREAMBLE:** Although not required it has been common practice to include a Preamble to gain the attention of the audience and introduce the Toast to the Flag. Brother Autry B. "Tom" Harmon (Past National Commander ~ 1996-1997) introduced the following (*National Sojourner Magazine ~ JULY/SEPTEMBER 1996*):

*What can I say to you Ole Flag!  
You are so great in every fold,  
So linked with mighty deeds of old,  
So calm, so still, so firm, so true.  
My throat swells at the sight of you Ole Flag.*

*-Anonymous-*

While attributed to "Anonymous", the above Preamble appears to have been drawn from a version of the first verse of Hubbard Parker's poem, *Old Flag* (reprinted below) which appeared in numerous patriotic publications and collections around 1918. The first verse might also be a good Preamble candidate.

### **OLD FLAG**

*What shall I say to you, Old Flag?  
You are so grand in every fold,  
So linked with mighty deeds of old,  
So steeped in blood where heroes fell,  
So torn and pierced by shot and shell,  
So calm, so still, so firm, so true,  
My throat swells at the sight of you, Old Flag.*

*What of the men who lifted you, Old Flag,  
Upon the top of Bunker Hill?  
'Mid shock and roar and crash and scream,  
Who crossed the Delaware's frozen stream,  
Who starved, who fought, who bled, who died,  
That you might float in glorious pride, Old Flag?*

*What of the women brave and true, Old Flag,  
Who, while the cannon thundered wild,  
Sent forth a husband, lover, child,  
Who labored in the field by day,  
Who, all the night long, knelt to pray,  
And thought that God great mercy gave,  
If only freely you might wave, Old Flag?*

*What is your mission now, Old Flag?  
What but to set all people free,  
To rid the world of misery,  
To guard the right, avenge the wrong,  
And gather in one joyful throng  
Beneath your folds in close embrace  
All burdened ones of every race, Old Flag.*

*Right nobly do you lead the way, Old Flag.  
Your stars shine out for liberty,  
Your white stripes stand for purity,  
Your crimson claims that courage high  
For Honor's sake to fight and die.  
Lead on against the alien shore!  
We'll follow you e'en to Death's door, Old Flag!*

*-Hubbard Parker-*

Use of a Preamble is a personal choice --- if used, it should be short, tasteful, set a patriotic tone, enhance the Toast and not overshadow, and come from the Heart. Examples of more popular Preambles (introductions of the Toast) are cited on page 4.

**4. VIDEO EXAMPLES:** Click on the links below for examples of the Toast to the Flag given at various events:

<https://youtu.be/EveSEAUz4>

<https://vimeo.com/24653341>

<https://youtu.be/nELzT05vxcs>

#### 4. A TOAST TO THE FLAG / POPULAR PREAMBLES:

[Print this page and carry with you as a reference]

##### PREAMBLE TO THE TOAST

Although not required, it has become a common practice to incorporate a preamble to the toast. Some more popular examples are provided below:

##### EXAMPLE 1:

What can I say to you Ole Flag?  
You are so great in every fold.  
So linked with mighty deeds of old,  
So calm, so still, so firm, so true,  
My throat swells at the sight of you Ole Flag.

##### EXAMPLE 2:

What can I say to you Ole Flag?  
You are so great in every fold.  
So linked with mighty deeds of old,  
So calm, so still, so firm, so true,  
My throat swells at the sight of you Ole Flag.  
And there you stand with colors bright,  
So, I think tis' only right,  
That since you neither brag nor boast,  
We honor you with this heart-felt toast.

##### EXAMPLE 3:

I give you a toast to the greatest national  
emblem to fly over land, sea, air and even  
outer space.

##### EXAMPLE 4:

A Toast to the Flag by John Daly.

##### "A Toast to the Flag"

by John J. Daly - 1917

##### Here's to the red of it--

There's not a thread of it,  
No, nor a shred of it  
In all the spread of it  
From foot to head.  
But heroes bled for it,  
Faced steel and lead for it,  
Precious blood shed for it,  
Bathing it Red!

##### Here's to the white of it--

Thrilled by the sight of it,  
Who knows the right of it,  
But feels the might of it  
Through day and night?  
Womanhood's care for it  
Made manhood dare for it,  
Purity's prayer for it  
Keeps it so white!

##### Here's to the blue of it--

Beauteous view of it,  
Heavenly hue of it,  
Star-spangled dew of it  
Constant and true;  
Diadems gleam for it,  
States stand supreme for it,  
Liberty's beam for it  
Brightens the blue!

##### Here's to the whole of it--

Stars, stripes and pole of it,  
Body and soul of it,  
O, and the roll of it,  
Sun shining through;  
Hearts in accord for it,  
Swear by the sword for it,  
Thanking the Lord for it,  
Red White and Blue!