

District Assembly Invocation and Flag Salute

March 26, 2011

Paul Harris, the founder of Rotary, wanted our meetings opened with an invocation. As you can imagine, this has been discussed and debated throughout the years of Rotary. In 2005, a Rotary Club in Oregon took on this topic, hoping to come to some resolution or conclusion. Indulge me a moment while I share with you what these Rotarians discovered about what our founder, Paul Harris, was looking for when he wanted meetings started with an invocation.

They began by asking themselves, “What was Paul Harris thinking? Why did he want us to open our meetings with invocations?” They discovered that he began with an invocation to create a bridge from chaos to calm, from our hurried lives to a state of reverence, from our smaller concerns to our larger focus on service above self. So, in the words of our founder, Paul Harris, I offer you this invocation for our District Assembly:

“May Rotarians continue to be ambassadors of goodwill to high and low, rich and poor, to all races, to the devotees of all religious faiths and members of all political parties, purveyors of tolerance, forbearance, justice, kindness, neighborliness and friendliness to all the inhabitants of this snug little world, the best little world which we know.”

—Paul Harris

As Rotarians and members of the business and civic communities, we likely recite the pledge of allegiance weekly, if not more often. All I ask of you today is that, as we recite the pledge together, as Rotarians, please think about the words you are saying. Join me now in honoring our freedom:

“I pledge allegiance...

By Lisa Johnson, President, Rotary Club of Chula Vista