

Watergate - 1973

Although the integrity of the political structure in the United States has been gravely compromised by the Watergate scandals, we believe that the courageous persistence of some segments of the press and the other media—as well as the Judiciary and the Congress—in searching for and uncovering the truth, is a heartening testimonial to the innate strength of the democratic process.

We Further Believe that the gross subversion of democratic values and practices symbolized by “Watergate” has jolted the public out of a dangerous complacency and has alerted us to the fact that freedom must be guarded with vigilance; that the philosophy that the end justifies the means must be replaced by uncompromising morality and that a citizen must hold himself, and be held responsible, for both his actions and his failures to act.

However, reform of governmental procedures, important as they are, will not in themselves be sufficient. It is the moral climate of our society which is a breeding ground for the evils of “Watergate.” A fundamental change in that climate can be effected only by a return to religious values, a determination to deal openly and honestly one with another and an understanding that to struggle for the right is more admirable than to achieve an election victory.

But reform of governmental practices can help to reestablish more acceptable standards of probity. Urgent steps toward that end are indicated. Therefore, the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, through its United States affiliates, calls upon the Congress of the United States to give these matters full and prompt consideration with a view to the enforcement of existing safeguards and the enactment of appropriate new legislation for added safeguards where necessary including:

- 1) New curbs on the collection, reporting and distribution of campaign funds;
- 2) Limitations on campaign expenditures;
- 3) Legislation further reducing the limit on private donations to any political party or to candidates for any elected office.

Finally, while the complex of questionable practices and often illegal ones which come under the general title “Watergate” were related to political activities within the United States, there is a warning to be found in them for the peoples of all free societies and nations. They, like the citizens of the United States, must consistently be concerned with personal and societal morality and guard against encroachments on their democratic processes and liberties.