

14th Sunday Ordinary Time Year “A”

July 4-5, 2020

Relying on the protection of Divine Providence

Readings: Zechariah 9: 9-10; Romans 8: 9, 11-13; Matt. 11:25-30

July 4, 2012– I had just begun my assignment here, it hit 100° and yet people came out in droves to watch the fireworks at the State Capitol; the streets and parking lots were packed. People of all backgrounds gathered to celebrate the birth of our nation. It seems like ancient history, as fireworks have been absent from the State Capitol grounds for years. **“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”**¹

When is the last time that you read the Declaration of Independence? It is a worthwhile exercise of 1138 words. The colonists knew and so stated that governments should not be changed lightly. Of course, they are not referring to individual leaders, subject to an election, but rather the form of one’s government ought not to be changed lightly. So, they compiled the reasons and enumerated them, including imposed taxes without consent and the prevention the population of these States.

They also knew that some evils are to be “suffered,” (i.e. tolerated) that it is a greater good so to do. If not everything can be ‘righted’, at least not immediately, it is equally true that not all ‘evils’ are as they put it, ‘sufferable.’ **The willingness of society remain passive in the face of its problems is not a sign of virtue but of decadence.**

Many colonists had been discouraged, even to the point of despair. They felt their voices were ignored, feeling more and more isolated from the authorities in England. Our founders boldly closed their declaration: “For the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.”²

¹ Declaration of Independence, preamble

² Declaration of Independence, final sentence.

The lessons today are manifold, for increasingly, people experience division and isolation. Much of it is Covid-19 related, but it goes deeper. Still, this weekend's 244th anniversary ought to be a time of celebration as well as for sober reflection. We celebrate the great experiment that led to our nation, even as we commit ourselves to being active citizens who strive to make this country better.

Our first reading from Zechariah prophesies this of the King's entry into Jerusalem. It is a humble entry, riding on a donkey. And yet, we are told: "His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." Is the Lord's dominion from sea to sea? Have we recognized the Lord's dominion in our lives, in our families and in our communities?

Are we looking for a human savior to solve all our problems, to right the wrongs in this nation, to heal our wounds? Our faith reminds us that no human being can accomplish this. We must allow the Lord to be our hope and our strength.

On Independence Day weekend, we pause to count our blessings, for failing to acknowledge them or their source is tantamount to losing trust in the Providence of almighty God. It is the appropriate moment to ask ourselves whether we truly rely on the protection of Divine Providence or appeal to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions? If not, why not? And what can we do in the face of this?

While we cannot effect the change single handedly, we most certainly can love our country in its ideals and strive to live them by means of applying our Catholic faith in our daily lives. We change our nation one person at a time, beginning with ourselves.

May we strive to live the ideals of our faith and of our country, seeing no contradiction between them. May God speak to our heart and bless our nation abundantly. [Archbishop John Carroll's Prayer for the

Government (1791), adapted for use today, follows as our General Intercessions]

Archbishop John Carroll's Prayer for Government (1791)

We pray, Thee O Almighty and Eternal God! Who through Jesus Christ has revealed Thy glory to all nations, to preserve the works of Thy mercy, that Thy Church, being spread through the whole world, may continue with unchanging faith in the confession of Thy Name.

We pray Thee, who alone art good and holy, to endow with heavenly knowledge, sincere zeal, and sanctity of life, our chief bishop, **Pope Francis**, the Vicar of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the government of his Church; our own archbishop, **Bernard Hebda**, all other bishops, prelates, and pastors of the Church; and especially those who are appointed to exercise amongst us the functions of the holy ministry, and conduct Thy people into the ways of salvation.

We pray Thee O God of might, wisdom, and justice! Through whom authority is rightly administered, laws are enacted, and judgment decreed, assist with Thy Holy Spirit of counsel and fortitude the President of these United States, that his administration may be conducted in righteousness, and be eminently useful to Thy people over whom he presides; by encouraging due respect for virtue and religion; by a faithful execution of the laws in justice and mercy; and by restraining vice and immorality. Let the light of Thy divine wisdom direct the deliberations of Congress, and shine forth in all the proceedings and laws framed for our rule and government, so that they may tend to the preservation of peace, the promotion of national happiness, the increase of industry, sobriety, and useful knowledge; and may perpetuate to us the blessing of equal liberty.

We pray for his Excellency, the governor of this state, for the members of the assembly, for all judges, magistrates, and other officers who are appointed to guard our political welfare, that they may be enabled, by Thy powerful protection, to discharge the duties of their respective stations with honesty and ability.

We recommend likewise, to Thy unbounded mercy, all our brethren and fellow citizens throughout the United States, that they may be blessed in the knowledge and sanctified in the observance of Thy most holy law; that they may be preserved in union, and in that peace which the world cannot give; and after enjoying the blessings of this life, be admitted to those which are eternal.

Finally, we pray to Thee, O Lord of mercy, to remember the souls of Thy servants departed who are gone before us with the sign of faith and repose in the sleep of peace; the souls of our parents, relatives, and friends; of those who, when living, were members of this congregation, and particularly of such as are lately deceased; of all benefactors who, by their donations or legacies to this Church, witnessed their zeal for the decency of divine worship and proved their claim to our grateful and charitable remembrance. To these, O Lord, and to all that rest in Christ, grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light, and everlasting peace, through the same Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior. Amen.