

Fr. Martin's Reflection – July 2, 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a wonderful 4th of July. I know for most people in America it will be a day of family gatherings, BBQ's, fireworks, and the making of wonderful memories. I truly hope and pray that we will always appreciate and respect the rights and privileges we have because of the sacrifices many made in the War of Independence from Britain. The constitution that was created following independence has as its opening line: 'We the people ...' affirming that the government of the United States exists to serve its citizens. Let us pray for all our elected representatives, may they listen carefully to the needs of all whom they represent and be acutely aware of the needs of the poor and most vulnerable. May they carry out their duties of serving the people with a heart filled with love and a mind well informed. May they look to Christ Jesus as their template of how to love, forgive, and serve God's people.

Declaration of Independence

In the Declaration of Independence it states, among many other things, **'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men (people) 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.'** Wonderful words, but we all know from our history that it didn't hold true for the Native Indians or those with black or brown skin. It took a civil war to extend those rights to all Americans, and yet many stood in the way of them being fully realized, placing obstacle after obstacle in their way. It took over 100 years for African American and Native American voices to be heard and the denial of their rights realized. Many things have changed for the better, much has been achieved, opportunities have opened up, and voices are being heard. It is important that we never allow ourselves to become complacent, believing that 'I'm alright, so you're alright.' For us to fully appreciate the rights we have been accorded we must look up and look around us and see that all people are experiencing the same rights. If we, as Christians, find that races, some groups of people are being denied rights that we take for granted, then we too are being denied rights and we must do all we can to achieve equal rights for those that are being denied them so that we all can live in peace and tranquility. St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:26 puts it beautifully:

"If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness."

Let us always be grateful for the rights and privileges that the 4th of July has brought to us in America, but never let us ignore those same rights denied to others.

May God bless you and keep you now and always.

Fr. Martin