

Remembering God's Providence on Independence Day

Reflecting on this upcoming July 4th, I'm reminded of how much I have to be grateful for. I'm grateful for all the sacrifices made by so many for the liberties and freedoms we all enjoy today.

I'm also reminded by the words of our first President, George Washington. "We have God to thank for America's Birthday." He also said, "No People can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step, by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency."

Many will greet one another with a "Happy 4th of July," display flags, have BBQs and picnics, attend parties and of course watch magnificent displays of fireworks. I wonder, though, just how many will actually comprehend the history and price paid for the liberties we enjoy so much?

It seems we live in a land of paradoxes. We are all the beneficiaries of the foundations laid, through many a price paid and sacrifices made, by which we enjoy the liberties and freedoms in our nation. Yet, many forget the roots of those foundations. We are witnessing the inclination to casually disregard what previous generations have held to be of fundamental importance.

Let us not only greet one another with a "Happy 4th" or "Independence Day," but may we have a deep gratitude and appreciation for those who sacrificed for us to have them. May we also be keenly aware of just how volatile our liberties and freedoms are. They must not be taken for granted, but

stewarded with respect and a sense of we find ourselves losing the very things we have so cherished.

President Ronald Reagan once said: "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

Our Founding Fathers understood that freedom naturally decays as societies expand unless people of principle defend it. That tendency has been true at every point in human history and always will be.

Government has the necessary role of defending our liberty, free speech, the right to property, but virtue can become a vice when it attempts too much. We must be watchful to ensure that the government's good intentions don't become the overreach that becomes tyranny.

In our freedoms and liberties, we may not always agree on every issue, but may we remember to always have respect and show civility in our public discourse, even in our disagreements.

Let us remember and reflect upon the fundamental values that our nation was founded on.

The Declaration of Independence signed on July 4th, 1776 is as providential and powerful today, as it was then:

"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."

Yes, in our frail humanity there have been many challenges and

conflicts to address and work through since our founding, yet there is no other nation as young and as diverse as the U.S., so let us remember and reflect upon the redemptive and fundamental values that our nation was founded on.

And, to quote from the Pledge of Allegiance, "...One nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all..."

I find the words of the apostle Paul in Acts 17:26-28 and Galatians 5:1 fitting for us today, and part of my regular prayers:

"And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring'" (Acts 17:26-28).

"Stand fast therefore in the Liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). {eoa}

Blessings on this Independence Day and every day. Happy Fourth of July! {eoa}

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