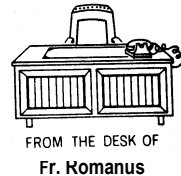


13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 1, 2018



Dear Parishioners,

Independence Day:

July 4th is a day dear to us, the citizens of the United States of America, as we celebrate our Independence as a nation. Independence Day is in remembrance of the day the Continental Congress adopted the final draft of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. Thirteen former British colonies made the declaration following unjust treatment under the draconian leadership of King George III of England and the British parliament.

It all started in 1767, when a tea company in India owned by the British started losing money. To make up for the losses, the British colonial government imposed taxes on all tea sold in British colonies, including America. Americans were outraged and protested. Samuel Adams and other Bostonians dressed up as Indians and dumped a cargo of the Indian Company's tea into the Massachusetts Bay. The situation further deteriorated when British soldiers fired on a crowd of protesters on the Boston harbor, killing some in the crowd ("the Boston massacres"). These two events changed the course of American history, leading to the war of independence in 1775 to push back against the British.

The First Continental Congress convened in 1774, and put together a list of grievances against the British monarchy. This would become the first draft of the Declaration of Independence. George Washington took command of the Continental Army and battled the British in Massachusetts and other parts of the colonies (the Revolutionary War). On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress came up with the second draft of a list of grievances, officially called the Declaration of Independence. It was not long before the colonies realized that they were not just fighting new taxes, but for freedom.

The War of Independence dragged on until 1783 when the nation gained independence. However, it was not until 1941 that Congress officially declared July 4 a federal holiday. In celebrating independence, we recall the brave men and women who shed their blood for our freedom. We should not take freedom for granted. One of the founding fathers, Patrick Henry, stated, "Give me freedom, or give me death." The quote was from a speech he made to the Second Virginia Convention in 1775. The speech was instrumental in convincing the convention to pass a resolution that delivered the Virginian troops for the Revolutionary War.

As we gather for picnics, fireworks and parades, it is important not to forget why we are celebrating. We equally need to be mindful of those around the world who are still in bondage and fighting for their freedom. Like freedom fighters before them, many would make the ultimate sacrifice for the liberation of their people. It is wonderful that our nation is engaged in many of these international struggles for freedom.

As we support the fight for freedom overseas, we should also be cognizant of the need to protect the freedoms already won here at home. One of those is the "freedom of religion" under attack in some quarters and among some in our government. The Constitution states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Unfortunately, there has been gradual encroachments in this regard meant to undermine freedom of religion.

Hence, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has declared the two weeks leading up to the 4th of July as "Fortnight for Freedom." They are calling for special prayers, study, catechesis and public action to support the ongoing struggle to protect religious freedom and freedom of conscience in our nation. Wishing everyone a Happy 4th!

Fr. Romanus