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Subject: Independence Day
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Independence Day



Dear Friends in Christ,

Without a doubt, this year's Fourth of July celebrations will be markedly different. Obviously, because COVID forbids the large gatherings we usually have. But even more because our nation continues to be convulsed by violence. The legitimate protests against the killing of George Floyd seem a distant memory. They have been quickly swept aside by riots and now the indiscriminate tearing down and vandalism of statues -- in particular, statues of the very men we honor today, our nation's Founding Fathers.

Now, in the erecting of such statues and in today's celebrations, we honor those men -- but not because they were perfect. We honor them because, despite their conspicuous weaknesses and failures, they bestowed on us the treasured principles of self-government and ordered liberty. As we know, the truths that they announced today in the Declaration of Independence were denied to certain groups in our nation's history. But the failure to apply our nation's foundational truths does not vitiate the founding itself.

That is why Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr. both rooted their reforms in our nation's founding and in particular in the document we honor today. They did not seek to reject the past simply because it was tainted (whose past isn't?). On the contrary, they sought to bring the truth that "all men are created equal" to its logical conclusion.

So today, in the midst of so much animosity towards our Founding Fathers, do not be ashamed to celebrate our nation's founding. It was not perfect, but no

human endeavor is. Savor the words of the [Declaration of Independence](#). Reread Lincoln's [Gettysburg Address](#) and King's [I Have a Dream](#) (even better, *listen* to King's speech, as he is a master orator). To cut ourselves off from the past, as many want to do, does not make us more free. On the contrary, it uproots us from our principles and makes us susceptible to whatever new ideology comes along.

Live your freedom as Catholics. One of the hallmarks of our founding is religious freedom, something virtually unknown in the world at that time. That freedom is not neutral or without purpose. It is ordered toward the *public* living out our faith. The best way to celebrate and contribute to our nation's freedom is to live as faithful Catholics and witness courageously to the truth of our Faith.

May the Lord bless you with a joyful Independence Day. May you use your freedom to know and serve Him Who sets us truly free. And may God bless America.

Updates...

- **Phase 3.** We have now entered Phase 3 of reopening. Please see the Diocese of Arlington [statement](#). The limit on 50% occupancy in places of worship is now lifted. At the same time, the guidelines for social distancing still apply. Parishioners 10 years old and older are still expected to wear face coverings in accordance with Governor Northam's Executive Order 63, which allows exceptions for health reasons and specific religious rituals. Bishop Burbidge is continuing the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation until further notice. However, if you can get to Mass, if you are under 65 years old and without underlying health conditions, then you are encouraged to do so.
- We will continue to livestream Masses and keep the 730am Mass as the seniors Mass.
- **Reversing the Confessionals.** To provide for social distancing in the confessionals, we have reversed the confessionals. The priest will sit in the small box where the penitent usually goes. The penitent will go to the larger room where the priest usually sits. This will provide a larger space for penitents. We will also be upgrading the ventilation system in the confessionals to make for better air circulation.
- **8th Grade Summer Celebration!** All parish 8th graders are invited to a party on July 17th on the rectory lawn. Go [here](#) for more information and to sign up!

- **Rectory Ramblings.** *Monday night at 8pm* I will host Eric and Logan Horne, parishioners who spent several years as missionaries in Cameroon. Please join us to learn about their experience.
- **Food Distribution.** Our first Friday food distributions have continued through the pandemic on a drive-thru basis. The number of families requesting food has increased and our supplies are diminished. Please consider donating one-two pound bags of rice or beans, boxes of cereal, canned meat (chicken or tuna), pasta, pasta sauce, peanut butter, jelly, hearty soups, canned ravioli or chili. (No glass, please.) Your donations can be placed in the baskets in the vestibule of the church. Our next food distribution is July 10. We appreciate your support as we work to help feed those in need.

Through the intercession of our Lady and Saint James, may the Lord bless and keep you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Scalia

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