

Dear Sacred Heart Parishioners,

For most of us, from the time we are very young, we are taught about those “certain unalienable rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” For others, like my Grandparents, who traveled, with danger and difficulty, from the Old Country to the New World those words were heard as promises and possibilities, dreams and hopes. What led them to make such sacrifices and endure so many struggles, to join the “huddled masses yearning to be free”? They would look out, across the Great Ocean ahead, forward, onward, their hearts filled with hope because of one word and all that it meant: “America”. Because so many of those strangers and sojourners not only held the gift of hope but also the blessing of faith, they would have no difficulty understanding and accepting where these “unalienable rights” originated. We are “endowed by the Creator” with them. These rights are given to us from God who made us in His own image and likeness. The Declaration of Independence, containing these awesome words, was approved and adopted by the Second Continental Congress, but the rights themselves are gifts from God, our Creator, to us, His beloved Creation. People, like my Grandparents and so many others, came to America because they believed these “Gifts” from God were waiting here for them. The people in today’s Gospel had no faith in the “gift” of Jesus or the gifts He came to offer them. If they only believed, they would have received the gifts of everlasting Life, true Freedom, and Happiness with Him forever in His Kingdom. As we gather this Holiday weekend, to celebrate our nation and our world emerging from all the pandemic hardships, let us pause at home or at Church, in backyards or beaches to remember and give thanks to our Creator who is also our Father, our Savior who is also our Brother, and the gift of America which will always be “One Nation, Under God” in whom we trust and believe.

“O beautiful for pilgrim feet, Whose stern, impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat Across the wilderness!  
America! America! God mend thine ev’ry flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law.”

God bless America!

*Father John*