

Those of you who are Internet savvy may have heard about a posting on YouTube by guy named Mark Dice.

He took it upon himself to have some fun interviewing some beachgoers in California asking them what the Fourth of July is all about.

He asked one young person to name the country that we broke away from in 1976.

She said she really didn't know but, with a little prodding from Mark Dice, she thought it was China. Then she added, "I really did know that!"

He asked another person, "I want to talk to you about the Chinese revolutionary war. When we signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and broke away from China, what year was the Declaration signed?"

She hemmed and hawed and said she thought it was in eighteen hundred and something." Then she took off running as fast as she could.

He asked others the same basic questions and spiced it up a bit by referring to Jesse Ventura and Jack Lemmon,, as being signers of the Declaration of Independence.

On another occasion, he referred to having declared our independence from Mexico.

I think you get the picture.

Watching all this made me kind of sad that some don't know our history very well.

This is a nation that was founded upon the notion that we must be free from tyranny and we must be dependent upon God.
Our nation's founding document declared independence from Great Britain; but with equal passion, dependence upon God.
The spirit of 1776 was one of reverence and trust in God.

The present-day American ideal of freedom can be described as being independent or self-dependent.

From this perspective to be free, means that I am the captain of the ship of my life.

I set the agenda for it.

I determine what is good or evil.

This attitude is reflected in such statements as, "It's my life and I'll do with it what I want." or "Who are you to tell me what I can or cannot do?" or

"You have your truth and I have mine."

Being independent is what we all strive for.

And it starts early in our lives.

When we were new parents, Donna and I were given a lot of advice.

The same theme echoed over and over again,,,,, do everything you can to get that baby independent.

Don't hold the baby too much or you'll spoil him.

Let him cry for a while and eventually he will fall asleep.

Start solids as soon as you can, so he isn't so reliant on you for feeding.

He needs to start walking as soon as he can, so he can be independent and get around himself.

He should be riding a bike by 5 years old.

Getting kids to grow up is something people all seem to push.

And I get that push because our culture today has an attraction to being self-reliant and focusing on independence.

Independence is seen as a good thing and dependence,,, not so good.

Even when I looked up the definition of these words,

independence sounds so much better.

Independence: freedom from control, influence, or support, being self reliant.

Dependence: subordination or subjection to, relying on or needing someone.

I don't know about you, dependence sounds bad.

It goes against the "I can do it all" mindset that we've grown up with.

Haven't we been told that independence equates to confidence?

However, what I'm learning is that if I want follow Christ, I can't be self-reliant.

It actually goes against what Christianity is.

When we choose to follow Jesus, we start to deny ourselves and surrender to God's calling in our lives by having trust in Him, and trusting that He is the master planner of our life.

This is not easy to do and I struggle with it every day.

When we take the wheel from God and try to steer our own ship, we can miss out on the blessings and freedoms that happen when we surrender to, and depend on the Lord to guide us.

Here is something it took me a long time to figure out: we all have a need for Jesus.

We have a longing deep within, an empty space in our soul that can only be filled by Him.

All the other things we try to fill that void with are like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.

It just doesn't work.

And the truth is, we can spend our entire lives trying to make the peg fit.

We can try as hard as we want, but that space won't be filled until we become dependent on God.

We can try and be the best person we can be, but God demands perfection.

Since we live in a fallen world, the only way to experience eternal life is to be **dependent** on Jesus.

Our Savior took all the wrongs we have done,, and died on the cross to pay for our punishment.

Because of this, now when God looks at us, He can see a glimpse of perfection in us, through Jesus.

Accepting God into our heart is the first step in giving up our independence and learning to depend on Him.

Dependence on God is anti worldview, which is truer today than I think it ever was.

Remember Father David's homily from last week on apostolic times?

We are living them right now.

We are told from a young age to be independent not dependent, so why do we need to depend on God?

- Because everything in this life is shifting; here today and gone tomorrow. But God is steady and gives us a sure foundation.
- Because God can help us through dark periods of our lives like no one else can.
- Because when we depend on God it is easier for us to talk to others about how God has blessed us.
- And because God already knows our future,, we can let Him ,,steer our ship.

Here's a few easy ways to try to become more dependent on God:

- Get in the Word of God. Join a small Bible Study or prayer group.
- Download a Bible app on your phone and set up reminders to read it daily
 - (My Catholic Life.org is a good one to try)
- Pray: it opens up communication between us, and the Architect of the World.
- Focus on God more than the problems in life. Try to worry less and pray more.

I don't know about you, but in a culture of self-reliance, I'm trying to get closer to God. I want to be God-reliant, trusting in His plans and questioning mine.

The world might think that dependence like this is a sign of weakness, but it's actually the complete opposite.

Knowing that we can't make it on our own and are dependent on Him,

is acknowledging where our strength comes from.

Our strength comes from the maker of heaven and earth.

And that's not a negative thing.

It's the most wonderful thing in this world.

So with Independence Day on Monday, try to find time to think about being more dependent on the Lord and His grace, His strength, His help and His wisdom.

For it is being dependent on God that truly sets us free!