

Sermon for Third Sunday after Trinity

Friday, we enjoyed the 249th celebration of the Declaration of Independence of our Nation.

On the 4th of July 1776 we declared our resolve to defy the British Crown and declared our independence as a nation with these words:

“When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with one another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that

they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.”

In case you have forgotten, the “stated causes” that “impelled” the founding fathers to that separation began in this way:

“We hold these truths to be selfevident,

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.

That to secure these rights,

Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

Some of you may wonder what these words are doing in a sermon for the Third Sunday after Trinity.

How could Church dare to speak of State?

We are separate, after all.

The answer is simple.

We are a nation who is struggling with our ideals.

Although the mightiest nation on this earth, we have somehow come to pervert the very ideals that we claim to uphold.

If we are to celebrate our independence, shouldn't we know what the word means?

A Dictionary definition of the word sounds like this: "1. The state or quality of being independent; freedom from the influence, control, or determination of another or others."

The principal benefit of our independence is said to be the concept of freedom.

What was once defined as the ability to live beyond the influence of arbitrary power has somehow become understood as being able to do whatever you want, whenever you want to, no matter who else is effected by the outcome of those actions.

That latter definition hardly qualifies as freedom.

It more closely resembles anarchy.

This type of conduct is, in a word, irresponsible.

The idea of sovereignty of the individual has been distorted severely, and requires correction. Have we forgotten that we are members of a nation of laws?

Because we are such a nation, we have an inherent responsibility toward our fellow citizens.

Our nation's strength is based on a collective tolerance of different points of view, and a deliberate and sincere exercise of civic responsibility to assure that we remain free to exercise that diversity.

Somewhere in my education I was told that the rights that I have can only be exercised to the point that my

conduct does not infringe on the rights of others.

We must continue to respect the opinions and rights of other citizens if we are to sustain this nation as a government that represents us all.

We must function as a team.

Individuality is a freedom that must be tempered by honest consideration for others.

There is another strength of this nation that we may be taking for granted.

At the end of the Declaration of Independence, we find these final

**words above the signatures of 56
brave souls:**

**“And for the support of this
Declaration,**

***with a firm reliance on the protection
of Divine Providence,***

**we mutually pledge to each other, our
Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred
Honor.”**

**The great majority of these men, and
their families died penniless for their
commitment to founding this great
nation.**

**Let us now depart from our State
and give consideration to the Church.**

Just as we hope to remain one nation indivisible, we are one body in Christ.

There is a solution to our present plight.

The strength of our nation and our path to the kingdom of heaven requires the same things of us.

What can be found in our consideration of Saint Peter's First Epistle?

These are the questions we must ask ourselves.

What does it mean to be subject to one another?

What does it mean to be clothed with humility?

Why would God resist the proud and give grace to the humble?

What reason would God have to exalt those willing to be humbled before Him?

The answers to these profound questions can only be found upon our reflection.

We must be aware that our adversary walks about seeking to devour us as a roaring lion.

By seeking peace with our fellow citizen, by placing the needs of others before our own we will begin the process of repairing the fabric of a great nation here on earth while

**strengthening the Body of Christ for
all who seek heaven.**

**In our contemplation for answers, we
have solace in the promises of
today's epistle.**

**Peter tells us what to expect after we
have suffered for a while,**

**after we have attempted to become
stronger,**

**after we have resisted the devil and
remained steadfast in our faith in
God...**

**"The God of all grace, who hath
called us unto his eternal glory by**

**Christ Jesus...will make you perfect,
stablish, strengthen, settle you.**

**To Him be glory and dominion for
ever and ever.”**

AMEN

Ron Wikander