

Column063019

Companions on the Journey

June 30, 2019

Dear Friends,

Independence Day. The Constitution of the United States. The Declaration of Independence. Important documents filled with words worth remembering and celebrating. In the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence we read: “We declare these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal and 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....”

What powerful words--succinct, meaty, idealistic, clear. That sentence, more than any other, has probably carried this country for over two hundred years. Notice that there is implied not only that truth exists (that there is something above and beyond us to which we are beholden as human beings) but that the particular truths mentioned are described as self-evident, right there for everyone to see and accept.

The words convey a meaning but what we find as human beings is that these words do not always convey the exact same meaning to everyone. For example, “all men are created equal”. That self-evident truth so described did not apply for the longest time to women. So, maybe 'men' is really what was meant. But then there were all those former slaves (women and men) who also were not equal. There were Italian and Irish who were not equal. Sometimes today there are others too who are not so equal—Asians, Hispanics, Muslims, etc.

Then there are those other words about rights. There is a self-evident truth that there is the right to life. Ah, but how far does that right extend? Who is included? Who is excluded? Up until 1973, when the Supreme Court of the United States somehow discovered within the words of the Constitution the “right” to have an abortion out of the unwritten “right to privacy,” the extent to which this truth applied was always increasing. That Supreme Court said that the right to life did not extend to the child in the womb. Once the Supreme Court established that it did not include the littlest ones then death took hold in this country in a very bad way. When the late Holy Father Saint John Paul II spoke about a “Culture of Death” that has been let loose in our world does anyone really doubt that this is so? With all the violence

and bloodshed in our world today, do you or I need any more proof that there is a powerful culture of death--terrorist actions, abortions, drive-by shootings, gang-related killings, capital executions, assisted suicides, suicide bombers, killing after raping, killing to cover up an affair, killing to gain an inheritance, killing out of spite, killing out of rage, killing to be rid of a child—and all out of the conviction it can be gotten away with?

We celebrate Independence Day. Our country was born out of a desire to be independent of tyranny, of the misuse of power. After 243 years perhaps it is time for us to ask ourselves if we have started to become what our patriot ancestors sought to overthrow? Have we begun to abuse the power we have? Is the majority no longer to be on the watch for the weak and the needy and the troubled and those who have so little hope? What about the innocent and unprotected? Have we skipped over the first of the unalienable rights (life) to focus more exclusively on the second of those rights

(liberty) but only as it applies to me personally, my freedom to choose and acquire happiness? Besides celebrating and cooking out this weekend, perhaps we should also do some thinking and reflecting and praying too lest we lose our way. Or perhaps even our very souls.

In the Peace of Christ,