

PRESIDENTIAL PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE JULY 4 HOLIDAY WEEK

Our prayers this week begin with thanks to God for the freedom and liberty that He has bestowed upon America. As we celebrate 234 years of freedom, we are reminded that without Divine help, this nation would never have been born. Pray that we will continue to be a nation that God can bless, honoring and welcoming Him into our public and private lives.

Give thanks for the good health report the President received from his medical doctors this week. Continue to pray for wisdom as he leads our nation, and as our nation leads the world in these perilous times. Pray for the leaders of the House and Senate as the Congress continues its work prior to the summer recess.

Pray that any acts of terrorism that may be planned for this important holiday week will be thwarted, both here in the states and abroad. Continue to pray for the men and women who serve and defend our country that they will be protected from danger. The freedom we enjoy is the fruit of many sacrifices made by brave and loyal Americans, and we owe them a debt of gratitude and our prayers for their safety.

INSPIRATIONAL REFERENCE FOR THE WEEK

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance. Psalm 33:12 (NIV)

THE FAITH OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS

On this, the 226th anniversary of our nation, it is appropriate to consider the forces that led to the cataclysmic break of the colonies from Britain. Our Founding Fathers were among the finest leaders on the continent. They were merchants, farmers, attorneys and ministers. They were men of great energy and passion seeking to develop a classic system for governing the colonies. But above all, they were dedicated to building the nation on a foundation of biblical faith with honesty and humility.

Consider Benjamin Franklin. An ardent advocate of public education for all, he urged that the schools teach "the necessity of a public religion . . . and the excellency of the Christian religion above all others, ancient or modern." He was also one of the chief advocates for a paid, permanent chaplain of Congress, and when he helped found the college named for him, he insisted that it be built "on Christ, the Corner-Stone." For further evidence of Franklin's faith, see the quote below.

George Washington openly promoted and relied upon his Christian faith. He, too, affirmed the importance of children learning "above all, the religion of Jesus Christ." His reliance on prayer is well documented, as illustrated in the quote below. Consider also these words of his: "Almighty God: We make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government, and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large."

Thomas Jefferson invoked the blessing of God and cited Scripture in many instances. Remember it was he who wrote the immortal words pledging to the citizens of the young nation that they are

"endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights." By acknowledging God as the Giver of Rights and the Author of Life, he expresses the reliance he and his compatriots had in God.

"RESISTANCE TO TYRANTS IS OBEDIENCE TO GOD"

This revolutionary war battle flag dates from 1776 and succinctly sums up the sentiments of the colonists. The belief that King George III of England had become tyrannical in his rule over the colonies was widespread, and the words are attributed to patriot and President Thomas Jefferson. Because of their steadfast faith in God and willful obedience to the Scriptures it was vitally important that the signers of the Declaration believed that their cause was not only just, but, in John Adams words, that "It is the will of God that the two countries should be sundered (separated) forever."

PRAYER QUOTE FROM A FOUNDING FATHER

"I therefore beg leave to move -- that henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven and its blessing on our deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to business; and that one or more of the clergy of this city be requested to officiate in that service."
--Benjamin Franklin

A DAILY PRAYER OF OUR FIRST PRESIDENT

"Almighty God, I yield thee humble and hearty thanks that thou has preserved me from the danger of the night past, and brought me to the light of the day, and the comforts thereof, a day which is consecrated to thine own service and for thine own honor. Let my heart, therefore, Gracious God, be so affected with the glory and majesty of it, that I may not do mine own works, but wait on thee, and discharge those weighty duties thou requirest of me. Give me grace to hear thee calling on me in thy word, that it may be wisdom, righteousness, reconciliation and peace to the saving of the soul in the day of the Lord Jesus. Grant that I may hear it with reverence, receive it with meekness, mingle it with faith, and that it may accomplish in me, Gracious God, the good work for which thou has sent it. Bless my family, kindred, friends and country, be our God and guide this day and for ever for His sake, who lay down in the Grave and arose again for us, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."

--From the Prayer Journal of George Washington

WORDS FROM AN AMERICAN PATRIOT

The Fourth of July is now the moment when by common consent we pause to become conscious of our national life and to rejoice in it, to recall what our country has done for each of us, and to ask ourselves what we can do for the country in return.

--Oliver Wendell Holmes, Former Supreme Court Justice
May 30, 1884, at Keene, NH

WORDS FROM PRESIDENT BUSH ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

"Each year on Independence Day, Americans honor and celebrate the courageous action that our Nation's Founders took on July 4, 1776 -- the signing of the Declaration of Independence. With that brave and profound decision, the Founders demonstrated their love for liberty and proved that they were willing to fight and die for freedom. As we honor our Founders' bold vision on this first observance of Independence Day since September 11, Americans possess a greater national unity and a deeper appreciation of the things that matter most in our lives -- our faith,

our love for family and friends, and our freedom.

In this new era, Americans share a renewed appreciation for the ideals that make our country strong. Our fine service men and women are fighting and winning the war on terror. They deserve the gratitude of all people who cherish freedom.

Throughout our Nation's history, Americans have been steadfast in their efforts to build a country of liberty, peace, and opportunity for all. As we act to lift the dark cloud of terror from our Nation and the world, we reaffirm our determination to preserve our Forefathers' legacy of freedom. In doing so, we honor their legacy as we move forward into the 21st century.

On this Independence Day we pay special tribute to all those currently serving in the Armed Forces and to our veterans. Their contributions have been critical to the defense of our country, and our Nation is grateful.

Laura joins me in extending best wishes for a safe and memorable Independence Day. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America."

--George W. Bush on July 3, 2002

INDEPENDENCE DAY PERSPECTIVE FROM OUR SECOND PRESIDENT TO THE FIRST LADY

"[This day] will be the most memorable epic in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the Day of Deliverance by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty, with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other from this time forward forever more."

--John Adams to Abigail Adams on July 4, 1776

WORDS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF INDEPENDENCE DAY

"Why is it that, next to the birthday of the Savior of the world, your most joyous and most venerated festival returns on this day [the Fourth of July]?"

John Quincy Adams

WORDS FROM A PRESIDENT ON THE FAITH OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS

"The men who have guided the destiny of the United States have found the strength for their tasks by going to their knees. This private unity of public men and their God is an enduring source of reassurance for the people of America."

-- Lyndon B. Johnson

ON THE MEANING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

It was a bold move that the framers of the Declaration chose to make. But they were convinced that it was the sole choice that remained for them. Thomas Jefferson was appointed to draft the document, and it was his task to express the convictions in the minds and hearts of the American people after many years of frustration and oppression.

Because they believed that the British Crown had no right to tax them so brutally, the "self-

evident truths" of which Jefferson spoke were born out of the religious views of the Founding Fathers -- that God is the giver of our human rights, not a king, and that it is His intent that His people enjoy those rights, including the right to self-government and taxation as well as religious freedom. In signing the Declaration of Independence, they were genuinely putting their lives at stake, for any of them could have been captured and tried for treason. But this did not hold them back from declaring their allegiance to this just cause. John Hancock is said to have signed his name in such large letters that the King could read it without his spectacles. Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island is said to have guided his right hand with his left, due to a nerve disorder. His words as he signed: "My hand trembles, but my heart does not."

OUR NATION'S GODLY HERITAGE

Many Americans aren't aware of the amazing fact that two of our most prominent Founding Fathers, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died within hours of each other on July 4, 1826, fifty years after the original Declaration of Independence. The contributions each man made to the quest for independence and the shaping of the new nation have been well documented. But many still question the Christian faith of the Founding Fathers and the impact of their faith on the world in which they lived. Consider this excerpt from the obituary of President John Adams in which the writer credits God for the vision, talents and passion of John Adams: "Had he been permitted by the Being to whom he owed his existence, who endowed him with great talents, and kept him in that course of irreproachable virtue and honor which has rendered his memory immortal, to select the time when his disembodied spirit should take its flight, he would probably have chosen the very moment when a whole nation were employed in celebrating the glorious result of patriotism, when his name, and those of his compatriots, was upon the lips of ten millions of people, and the voice of gratitude and joy was resounding throughout the whole of the American Republic.

Adams' final words were reported to be, "It is a great and glorious day."

Father Corapi...

I have fond memories of the 4th of July going back to when I was probably only four or five years old. We remember the parades, the picnics or barbecues, and the happy gathering of families. During the American Revolution, the legal separation of the American colonies from Great Britain actually took place on July 2, 1776, when the Second Continental Congress voted to approve the resolution of independence previously put forth by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia. After debate and revision Congress approved the Declaration of Independence on July 4th.

Of note is the letter John Adams, one of only two Founding Fathers who went on to become president, wrote to his wife Abigail:

"...This day ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of the continent to the other, from this time

forward forever more." (Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive. Massachusetts Historical Society)

Like so many of the Founding Fathers, Adams recognized that the day of deliverance came from the providential hand of almighty God. I am not sure about large numbers of duplicitous politicians and other so-called public servants today, whether elected or appointed. Freedom is a great thing, and we do well to celebrate it on the 4th of July. That being said, it's something rooted in truth, and apart from the truth there can be no authentic freedom.

"If you continue in my word [truth] you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8:31-32)

An individual, a country, or a world that does not remain rooted in objective truth cannot ultimately live in freedom. If you are serious about your faith, my dear friends, I strongly recommend that you read #1730-1748 as we approach the wonderful celebration of Independence Day, or the 4th of July.

Some highlights of this reality:

1731: Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. By free will one shapes one's own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude [true happiness].

1733: The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes...

One of the most common errors of all time is to confuse freedom and license. Today, frequently under the specious pretext freedom, mankind acts in a manner that is really license. We are not morally free to do whatever we choose to do. Only when rooted in truth and acting in objective truth can we hope to be free. No one has the moral right to do evil. No one has the moral right to choose to take an innocent life or to engage in actions that are out of accord with right reason or any objective standards of morality we have ever known.

The inevitable consequence of abusing freedom is losing freedom. Soon, if we do not alter our present course, the United States will no longer be the home of the brave and the land of the free. Loss of personal freedoms, one at a time, is already well underway. One day we shall awake from our moral slumber and find that we have become slaves.

We must live in truth and act in truth if we are to remain free. Abuse it and I assure you we shall lose it! ***Wake up America! God is not a disinterested spectator.*** Let's thank God for our freedom, but let's not sit by idly while the forces of darkness divorce freedom from truth. For, as Jesus says, *"The man who sins is the slave of sin."* (John 8:34)

I'll leave you with the motto of the United States Army Special Forces on this 4th of July:

De oppresso liber! (To free the oppressed)

Indeed, Jesus came to set the captives free. Let's do our part for our country and our world that we might all remain free in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

God Bless You, Fr. John Corapi

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The Glorious Fourth

In a letter to his wife Abigail, John Adams (2nd President of the U.S) told her of the actions of the Continental Congress on July 2, 1776. "The second day of July, 1776 [the actual day the Declaration was signed], will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations, from one end of the continent to the other, from this time forward forever."

As we celebrate Independence Day, as John Adams so aptly predicted, we must not forget nor overlook the intense struggle our Founding Fathers faced. Their Christian faith played a critical role in an era that altered the history of the world.

There is not a better example of this seamless devotion to God and country than Samuel Adams. In his time, Sam was far more famous than his cousin, John. Sam was known as the last of the great Puritans and the father of the Revolution. It was Sam Adams who organized the Sons of Liberty and the Committees of Correspondence. (By the way, if you're going out to a Tea Party on Saturday, historians believe that the first tea party, the one in Boston, was organized by Samuel Adams. It was that Boston Tea Party that lit the fuse of the American Revolution).

When Sam Adams was elected to that First Continental Congress and traveled to the gathering of leaders in Philadelphia, he thought the Continental Congress needed to begin its work on its knees--in prayer. But when the motion was made to call in a local clergyman to lead the worship, John Jay of New York and Edward Rutledge of South Carolina objected. We are too diverse, they said. We could never agree on whose prayers to say.

Rising to his feet, Sam Adams spoke: "I am no bigot," he said, "I can hear the prayer of any man of piety and virtue who is a friend to his country." Deeply moved, the delegates voted to approve Sam Adams' idea. The next morning, amid reports of the British moving against the people of his hometown of Boston, Sam knelt in prayer with his fellow delegates, as the Rev. Jacob Duch? prayed. "Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me, and fight against them that fight against me."

That inspired move by Sam Adams did much to overcome suspicions among the delegates. Joseph Reed of Philadelphia called that prayer "a masterly stroke." Those Founding Fathers could now work together for liberty.

Soon, Sam Adams would sign the Declaration of Independence. Alongside Sam Adams' name you can find that of Charles Carroll, a delegate from Maryland. Carroll was the richest man in

Congress and the only Roman Catholic. Nowhere else on earth in 1776 could you find an Evangelical like Sam Adams pledge "his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor" alongside a Catholic like Charles Carroll. They both risked death by hanging for signing that great Declaration. But they served the King of Kings and had no fear of King George III. *This is a Great example of ecumenism.*

In our efforts to maintain the freedoms won by our forefathers we must be like them--people of action and prayer. We must never sever our personal faith from our public stand for faith, family and freedom.

After we celebrate our independence as a nation on Saturday, I invite you to join thousands of Christians from across the nation on Sunday as they fall on their knees in prayer as a part of FRC's Call2Fall, declaring their dependence upon God, just like our Founding Fathers.

* Samuel Adams - 1722-1803, American statesman: a leader in the American Revolution and Governor of MA.

*Charles Carroll - American Revolutionary leader, patriot and legislator who was a member of the Continental Congress (1776-1778), signed the Declaration of Independence (1776), and served as a U.S. senator (1789-1792).