

## ***FOR THE GOOD OF THE HOUSEHOLD***

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### **CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE**

233 years ago, our Founding Fathers declared the thirteen colonies to be independent from Great Britain. A nation was born. Soon after, they drew up a constitution and established a government. We have never had to change that government since. The original still works. That is quite amazing when you think of those times and the years that have followed. And, so, we celebrate the Fourth of July.

It is a national holiday. Most get a free day from work. There are festivities that include parades and fireworks. Families enjoy backyard picnics. But, I wonder how many take the time to give worship to God and to render thanks, - for our independence. After all, that is what we are supposed to be celebrating.

Independence can mean different things to different people. All too many identify independence erroneously with freedom to do whatever one wishes. The buzzword in our day is "rights." But, rights are not based merely on one's wishes. Someone or something has to give us those rights. They are not there simply because we want them to be.

For our Founding Fathers, declaring independence was not simply something that they desired. It had a foundation. They felt entitled by natural law and by "nature's God," as they put it in the Declaration of Independence. The unalienable rights, which they enumerated and belong to every human being, they saw as an endowment by no one less than the Creator. I do not think that Thomas Jefferson, or any of the other signers of the Declaration, envisioned that the Supreme Court would ever think to redefine the dictates of natural law or of nature's God. And, yet, in the name of individual freedom, it has.

Two very prominent examples of this are those having to do with every individual's right to life and the right to practice one's religion. The first is denied to so many who are killed before they are even born. As was the case with slavery, it is a matter of recognizing human life as something sacred. The second is guaranteed by the Bill of Rights in the Constitution. While it says that no law is to establish religion, it also says that no law is to prohibit the free exercise thereof. Yet, such expression is forbidden at graduations in public high schools, even though both Houses of Congress begin their sessions with prayer. (Go figure!)

The thought that troubles me is what I perceive to be an unfaithfulness to the foundational documents of our nation. I believe that the United States is so unique that it has a God-given destiny and a particular role to play on the world stage. Our Founding Fathers may have had a sense of that. But, would they be proud to join us in celebration this Fourth of July? Or, would they be lecturing us on a few points? Might they not tell us that we have gotten it wrong on a number of issues?

Celebrate, we should, for we have opportunities like nowhere else in the world. Giving thanks to the Almighty, we must, for the blessings upon this nation have been abundant. However, let us also resolve to regain the values that are consistent with an authentic United States of America under God.