

REMEMBERING

Due to publication deadlines, I am always writing this column a week before you read it. As I write this particular column, we are observing Presidents' Day. For my readers, it will be "last week."

In years past, we observed Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays separately. That was on February 12 and 22. Forty-some years ago, our political leaders decided to join them and, then, to include all presidents in a one-day celebration. No longer are Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln to be treated special. All presidents became equal, - and, nameless.

Presidents' Day has become to be known for an extra day from work and from school. It is also known for special sales in our stores. I wonder what Presidents Washington and Lincoln would think about their memory being used for commercial purposes. Their lives and the dedication, which they brought to their leadership, deserve more than that. Both of these men made significant contributions to the formation of our nation.

They were men of Faith, - although, perhaps, not in the way that we might think. Nevertheless, they did believe in a Supreme Being that directs events and endows human persons with certain rights that governments cannot take away. Neither one thought of human slavery as right, even though their particular societal conditions dictated to them as to how they would or could approach the injustice. Preservation of the nation was the ultimate goal of both. For this, they were willing to sacrifice lives, including their own. Each one was humble in his own way. But, they, also, realized that what they were about was a part of history.

Presidents' Day, like many of our other holidays, should be a day of remembering. We would not be what we are without such men as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. No doubt, they, too, remembered their roots. That awareness, engrained deep in their psychic, is what propelled them into history.

As Catholic Christians, we recall our heritage and the legacy to which we are called when we gather at every celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy. Mass is a special time of giving thanks. We do so also every time that we observe a feast day or a saint's day. This, too, we do within the context of the Mass. Sundays are an important day in which to remember who we are as children of God and sisters and brothers of the Lord within his community of believers that we call the Church. This is why it is called the Lord's Day, remembering what it is that He did for us once and for all on the cross followed by his resurrection, as well as the blessings that we received during the past week.

We do not do enough remembering. Reflection requires a peaceful time, - sometimes silence and sometimes a conversation with others. However, so many prefer to be busy at all times, working on something, going somewhere, and, thus, shutting out opportunities to deepen our understanding of who we are. Consequently, we forget why we exist.

Why is it that we cannot observe holidays as holidays anymore? Instead, we run off to buy things we do not need or work to fulfill expectations and deadlines that we place upon ourselves. I'm a good one to talk! Here I am writing my column on Presidents' Day in order to get it into the paper on time.