

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 4, 2010
“Independence Day: Pressing Our Foundations.”

Last Sunday, in the 2nd reading, St. Paul got us in touch with our spiritual freedoms as the children of God.

St. Paul told those “testy” Galatians to stop bickering and sniping at each other, lest they end up doing each other in.

He went on to instruct them to reject all violence, hostility, and negativity.

Only then, he said, could their energies be freed up to do loving and caring things for one another.

Hence the freedom of the children of God.

Today, on our American birthday of Independence, we can think about and pray about our political and governmental freedoms that we are blessed to have as citizens of this great country, or as I said last week, at least we think we have.

And I say “think we have” because we are experiencing these days some real and significant challenges to the foundations of our American constitution and public policy.

As a context for this consideration, I would like to draw on the image of the motherland that we see in today’s first reading.

Isaiah portrays Israel, Jerusalem, and especially the Temple, as that loving, nourishing, nurturing mother, ever so generously feeding and forming her children.

It’s a beautiful image, really!

I don’t know about you, but whenever I have traveled out of our country, I’ve always had a warm and wonderful feeling when I got back inside the borders of the USA.

It’s that motherland feeling.

It’s home!

It’s the place where we know we have rights and privileges, access to police and public safety as citizens and we have governmental representation.

I think of poor Msgr. Goodill and his tragic death 5 years ago when a Mexican taxicab struck him down as he was crossing a street.

When we tried to pursue the case and find the driver, we were told that our efforts would be useless because Msgr. Goodill was a foreigner.

So homeland and motherland are important to have, indeed.

234 years ago today, those brave Americans signed the Declaration of Independence.

And, as Ben Franklin said then, they all hung together on their pledge, for surely if they didn't, they would hang separately for treason against England.

Subsequent to this day, 234 years ago, a constitution was developed.

As all constitutions do, it spelled out a way of life.

It defined how we shall be governed.

It listed our citizen rights.

And it grounded all of its contents in the fact that we were created by a loving God who made us men and women to collaborate with Him in the continuation of creation.

Hence, there is to be moral accountability to Him, and the ways He expects us to live.

These foundational roots are very clearly stated not only in our federal constitution, but in almost all of our state constitutions as well.

Yet, as I said earlier, we are seeing today some very real and significant challenges to these foundations.

We have the pro-life and abortion issues, about which there should be no question if we take seriously the root and context of our constitution.

There's the marriage amendment debate.

And then, of late, there's the health care reform law which still needs adjusted.

There's immigration reform that still needs to be addressed,

And a whole host of other issues, as well.

Now, a constitution is a living document in that realities of life do change, and thus the constitution needs, and has been, amended or re-interpreted.

But I've heard it said that there are judges and other ministers of justice out there who just simply dismiss the constitution as a very old, out-dated, and out-of-touch document.

I think of the US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals out in California and some of its decisions, for example.

This is very dangerous!

Attacking or disregarding our foundational roots is like trading-in your body.

Oh, I know there are times when you are hurting, that you'd like to trade yourself in on a new model.

But we can't.

We can fix and repair.

We can even get new body parts, thank God.

But we are still the same persons deep down.

And if we want to be Americans true to our motherland, then we must be sure to preserve our constitutional foundations.

Thank you, God bless you and Happy 4th of July!