



Sunday Reflection with Fr. Rafal



Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,

On this first Sunday of July, let me say few words about our celebrations of the **4th of July Independence Day** weekend. While Independence Day is a national holiday, the Catholic Church in the United States also recognizes it as a Memorial (*the Holy Mass was celebrated last Friday*). On this particular weekend, we are called to pray for our Country but also urged to exhibit “solemn reverence” for the freedoms we enjoy as citizens of this remarkable nation.

The idea of the separation of Church and State, however, can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, it guarantees every citizen's right to worship God as he or she chooses. But, when misinterpreted, it can lead some to attempt to silence the voice of the Church in public discourse. This certainly isn't God's intention, and many would argue that it wasn't the intention of our Founding Fathers either.

As Catholic citizens anywhere in the world, it is our duty to allow our faith to shape who we are and then to engage in every form of civil discourse, including the enactment of laws. Faith is not something to be practiced solely at church; it must permeate who we are and influence everything we do. True freedom enables us to enjoy the blessings of life, liberty, and happiness. Christians' life, liberty, and happiness cannot be detached from Christian citizenship. We have been endowed by our Creator with the right and duty to live and practice our faith openly in all aspects of our lives. This freedom encompasses work, school, sports, social groups, and even government. Although the Christian faith does not need to be “imposed” upon others, Christian citizens must be allowed to practice their faith anywhere and everywhere. If not, our God-given rights and even our Constitution risk being undermined.

As we celebrate our Independence Day weekend, let us reflect on the deeper meaning of independence. From a Christian perspective, “independence” is not the freedom to do what we want, when we want, because we want, but the freedom to do what we ought. True freedom is found only when we live in accordance with the will of God. This kind of freedom fosters internal liberty, and that liberty should become enshrined in everything we do and in every aspect of human life. You are the bridge between Church and State. While the Church does not govern the State, people of faith must.

I wish all of You a Blessed and Happy Independence Day weekend 2025!!

Fr. Rafal Ligenza,

Pastor — St. Joseph Catholic Church

A PRAYER FOR PEACE IN OUR COUNTRY

Father God, we pray for peace in this country. Let our shores be blessed with peace and harmony. Secure our future with tranquility and resolve all festering conflicts that threaten to boil over. Let this country be a shining beacon of understanding. Let there be peace between tribes, religions and families. May your Love be the cup we drink from every day and help us forgive each other's trespasses. Amen.