



HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH

National Catholic Church

15 THAYER STREET

SOUTH DEERFIELD, MA 01373

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SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 2026

13TH SUNDAY IN THE ORDINARY

9:00 am – Holy Mass of the Eucharist to be
celebrated in the Traditional Rite.

10:00 am – Parish Committee to meet.

OPENING HYMN

“TO THEE, WE COME, O LORD OUR GOD”

To Thee we come, O Lord, our God,
Before Thine altar, Father
Thou knowest best our yearning hearts;
This supplication answer.
Lift up from want Thy people, Lord,
Bless us, O God; O Father, bless our toil.
Under Thy cross we stand prepared,
To serve Thee with devotion;
Be it with sweat of blood or tears,
Or humble resignation.
For we Thy people are, O Lord,
Save us, O God; O Father, bless our toil.

ENTRANCE HYMN

(John 13:20; Romans 15:7)

V. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever receives the
One I send receives Me, and whoever receives
Me receives the One Who sent me.

R. Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed
you, for the glory of God.

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the
Holy Spirit,

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall
be, world without end. Amen.

THE GLORIA

Glory to God in the Highest,
And peace to His people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
Almighty God, and Father
We worship You; we give You thanks
We praise you for Your glory
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father
Lord God, Lamb of God
You take away the sins of the world
Have mercy on us
You are seated at the right hand of the Father
Receive our prayer
For you alone are the Holy One
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ
With the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

V. Let us pray: Let us pray: Almighty Father, You
welcome all who come to You in sincerity of heart.
Help us never to doubt Your tenderness, but rather
to entrust ourselves to Your mercy and to walk
humbly with one another. We ask this through the
same Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

R. Amen.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

A READING FROM THE 2ND KINGS

(2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16a)

One day Elisha came to Shunem, where there was a
woman of influence, who urged him to dine with her.
Afterward, whenever he passed by, he used to stop
there to dine. So, she said to her husband, "I know

that Elisha is a holy man of God. Since he visits us often, let us arrange a little room on the roof and furnish it for him with a bed, table, chair, and lamp, so that when he comes to us, he can stay there." Sometime later Elisha arrived and stayed in the room overnight. Later Elisha asked, "Can something be done for her?" His servant Gehazi answered, "Yes! She has no son, and her husband is getting on in years." Elisha said, "Call her." When the woman had been called and stood at the door, Elisha promised, "This time next year, you will be fondling a baby son."

V. This is the Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL

(Sirach 12:1-2, Hebrews 13:2)

V. If you do good, know for whom you are doing it, and your kindness will have its effect. Do good to the just man, and reward will be yours, if not from him, from the Lord.

R. Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels.



A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS

(Romans 6:3-4, 8-11)

Brothers and sisters: Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were indeed buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. If then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over Him. As to His death, He died to sin once and for all; as to His life, He lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.

V. This is the Word of the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA VERSE

(Sirach 33:13)

V. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

V. Lay clay in the hands of a potter, to be molded according to his pleasure, so are men in the hands of their Creator, to be assigned by Him their function.

R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.



THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

(Matthew 10: 37-42)

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

V. A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

R. Glory be to You, O Lord.

Jesus said to His apostles: "Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter, more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. "Whoever receives you receives Me, and whoever receives Me, receives the One who sent Me. Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because the little one is a disciple— Amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward."

V. This is the Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise be to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in One God,
the Father, the Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth
Of all that is seen and unseen

I believe in one Lord,
 Jesus Christ,
 The only Son of God,
 eternally begotten of the Father.
 God from God, Light from Light,
 True God from true God,
 begotten not made
 of one being with the Father.
 Through Him all things were made
 For us and for our salvation.
 He came down from heaven:
 by the power of the Holy Spirit
 He was born of the Virgin Mary
 And became man.
 For our sake, He was crucified
 under Pontius Pilate
 He suffered death and was buried.
 On the third day He rose again
 In fulfillment of the Scriptures.
 He ascended into heaven
 And is seated at the
 right hand of the Father.
 He will come again in glory
 To judge the living and the dead
 and His kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 The Lord and Giver of Life
 Who proceeds from the Father,
 With the Father and the Son
 He is worshipped and glorified.
 He has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in One, Holy, Catholic
 and Apostolic Church

I acknowledge one baptism
 for the forgiveness of sins.

I look for the
 resurrection of the dead
 And the + life
 of the world to come. Amen.



OFFERTORY VERSE

(Romans 12:13)

V. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

V. Lord our God, into Your hands we commend this day, our gifts, ourselves, and all of humanity. May we, who live the new life in Christ, prefer no one and nothing over You. May we care for others as You care for us. We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

COMMUNION VERSE

(Psalm 85:11)

V. Love and truth will meet; justice and peace will kiss.

CLOSING PRAYER

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And also with you.

V. Let us pray: Lord Jesus Christ, remove the barriers of sin among us who have been guests at Your Table. As we have received you, let us receive the One Who sent You. For you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and R. Amen.



PARISH CALENDAR AND NEWS

8:45 am - Morning Devotions

9:00 am - Holy Mass of the Eucharist

THIS WEEK'S MASS SCHEDULE

(June 29th – July 4th)

Monday	6/29	Feast – Peter & Paul, Apostles
Tuesday	6/30	Mass for Health and Healing
Wednesday	7/1	Mass to the Holy Martyrs
Thursday	7/2	Visitation of the BVM
Friday	7/3	Mass to the Holy Saints
Saturday	7/4	Mass to the Holy Name of Jesus

NEXT SUNDAY, JULY 5, 2026

14th SUNDAY IN THE ORDINARY

9:00 am - Holy Mass of the Eucharist to be celebrated in the Traditional rite

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10:00 am – Parish Committee to meet.



COLLECTION FOR THE CLERGY PENSION

I wish to thank all our parishioners and friends who contributed to the **PNCC Clergy Pension Fund**. This fund has been established to provide for the clergy of our Church assistance after giving to the Ministry of 20 years of unbroken service.



LECTORS PROCLAIMING THE “WORD”

6/28 – 13th Ordinary – Peg Kostiuk
7/5 – 14th Ordinary - Eric Dibrindisi
7/12 - 15th Ordinary - Jim Winn
7/19 - 16th Ordinary – Paula Winn
7/26- 17th Ordinary – Shirley Mielicki -Floyd



PRAYERS FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

“And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” - Luke 2:9

May we pray this day, and every day for the health and healing of all of us, most specially for those, who are homebound or in various facilities:

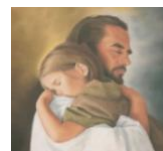
George and Janet Sadowski, Wayne and Pat Shaw, Dick Floyd, Richard Foster, Carolyn and Michael Rapalye, Karen Herzig, Paula Winn, Marge Sanderson, Brandon Poe, baby James, Stefanik Gadecki, Liam & Evelyn Spatcher, Jennie Harrington, Eric Rose, Lori Lukomski, Mick Szumski, Toka Bara, Laurie Lis, Todd Odell, David Moskin, Laurie Lis, Renata Wos, Jan Clark, Zoe Kinnunen, Debbie Bara, Houston & Brenda Knox and for others.

Let us Pray: O Lord, God of mercies, in Your kindness, stretch out Your hand and heal all our brothers and sisters who are in any way are ailing. Deliver them, according to Your will, from all their present sicknesses and illnessness, and grant them recovery in Jesus’ holy name. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ, Who lives and reigns with You. Amen.

July 2026						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JULY CALENDAR RAFFLE

Tickets for this raffle are now on sale. Please see Sue Dibrindisi to purchase tickets. Calendars listing the gifts are also available. I wish to thank all who have donated towards our Calendar Raffle.



OUR PARISH OUTREACH PROGRAMS

“Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.”

- Philippians 2:4

OUR FOOD MINISTRY

On **Saturday, June 20, 2026** our Parish gave out free groceries to those in need. I wish to thank Eric & Sue Dibrindisi for all their help.

We are still in need of the following:

- Cereals and instant oatmeal.
- Fruit juices, - V8, Apple and Cranberry juices.
- Powder milk / condensed milk.
- Tea bags.
- Pasta and spaghetti sauce.
- Boxes of Mac-n-cheese.
- Canned tuna in water.
- Canned meats- chicken, salmon,
- Ramen noodles.
- Soups- all varieties.
- Canned veggies and fruits.
- Children’s snack packs



OUR MINISTRY TO AID OUR VETERANS

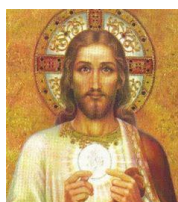
In the **month of June**, our Parish will be collecting items like **toiletries, hygiene products, small notebooks and pens, rain ponchos and umbrellas, flip flops for showers, activity books etc.** to aid both impatient from the VA as well as homeless veterans. All donations will be greatly appreciated.

Please note: A bin has been set up in our vestibule for your donations.



PIEROGI FOR SALE

Please note: We presently have cabbage and potato/cheese pierogi for sale. Price is \$12.00 per dozen and packaged ½ dozen per container. Please see Linda Puchalski for more information.



ONE BREAD, ONE BODY

Daily Devotions

Copies of the **“One Bread, One Body”** a daily devotional booklet is available, free of charge, in the vestibule of our Church. These daily devotions are in tune with the readings as found in the "Common Lectionary of the Christian Church.

Daily readings can be accessed on PCs by typing: **“www. usccb.org.”** For those who have smartphones, one can download the App **“Laudate,”** which will give daily scripture, the writings of the Early Church fathers, as well as providing the “Liturgy of the Hours” and other important devotional tools of our Faith.



EASTERN DIOCESAN MISSION & EVANGELISM COMMISSION

CALL TO PRAYER

In the month of June, the Eastern Diocese of the PNCC. has called upon all its members and friends to offer **prayer at 12:00 noon each Wednesday.**

JUNE – SACRED VOCATIONS MONTH

Let us Pray: Almighty and Eternal God, in Your plan for our salvation You provide priests as shepherds for Your people. Inspire men to answer Your call to become priests, because “the harvest is great but the laborers are few.” Grant Your Church an increase of priests and keep them faithful in their love and service to You and the people entrusted to their care. Through their faith and ministry may Your light shine in the world and Your kingdom be built among us. Through Jesus Christ, our High Priest. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.



CATHEDRAL OF THE PINES RINDGE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Eastern Diocese of the PNCC will gather on July 12th at the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, New Hampshire for worship and fellowship.

3:30 PM Holy Mass of the Eucharist

Following Holy Mass, a complimentary dinner reception will take place at the Woodbound Inn, Ridge, New Hampshire. Reservations are required. Please see Fr. Koerber if you are interested in attending. Thank you.

HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH



SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2026

12:00 am – 2:00 pm Take-ou

To be held on the Church Parking Lot

Menu: BBQ chicken, baked potato, corn on the cob, salad, and desert

\$18.00 per meal ticket

Maximum Number of Tickets: 180

For tickets, please call:

Fr. Robert Koerber at (413) 665-2129

or

Sue Dibrindisi at (413) 586-4315

RAFFLE TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE

- Multiple prizes
- Multiple chances to win on a single ticket.
 - Need not be present to win.
- All winners will be notified by the contact information given.

We have begun to collect prizes for our BBQ. If you would like to donate a gift basket or gift certificates, please see or contact Sue Dibrindisi. Sponsorship forms and tickets will be sent out next week to parishioners and local businesses for support.



FRONTIER CABLE ACCESS (FCAT)

I had the opportunity to speak this past Thursday with my dear friend, Jonathan Boschen, the General Manager of **FCAT**.

The following are the times that our weekly Sunday Masses can be viewed on channel 12.

- **Wednesdays** at 10:00 am and 2:00 pm.
- **Sundays** at 10:00 am, 2:00 pm, 6:00 pm & 9:00 pm.



THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Reflections

Whoever does not carry the cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple. – Luke 14:27

I think, that when most of us, look at the life of Jesus, named Yeshua, and read His “Good News,” found in the New Testament, find that the One, who was so filled with the love, compassion, mercy for forgiveness, the reflection of a son to a Father.

However, in today’s Gospel according to Saint Matthew, we see another side of Jesus, “Whoever loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”

In the Gospel of Luke 14:26, Jesus is recorded to using even harsher words: “Whoever comes to Me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be My disciple.

Some may think, that with these saying of Jesus, Jesus would contradict his eternal message that we should love God above all and love one’s neighbor as oneself,” but we hear in the next teaching, Jesus tells us that we need to “hate” one’s family.

But I feel that the essence of today’s Gospel, Jesus is not “sugar coating” what is the price and commitment it takes to be a “true disciple” unto Him.

Merriam Webster defines a “**disciple**” as one who is “**a follower or student of a teacher, leader, or a philosopher,**” and the word “**worthy**” is defined as “**having worth or value.**”

Now Matthew and Luke seem to use the words “worthy” and “disciple” interchangeably but in reality; to follow Jesus as a “true” disciple, one must have value.



On Monday, June 29th, Christian Churches will celebrated the **Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul.**

St. Peter is known as the “Apostle unto the Jews” while Paul is known as the “Apostle unto the Gentiles.” They are like two great pillars, by which the church of Christ is supported upon.

In our church, above our main altar in our sanctuary, we find three statues. In the center is Jesus and on each side of Him, are blessed statues of Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

In my personal study of St. Paul, I looked more closely to his discipleship and what it cost Paul, to be a “true” disciple of Jesus.

In the book of Acts of the Apostles, I first read, of Paul was traveling to Damascus to arrest Christians, where he encountered Jesus, as a blinding light and was transformed. But this transformation came with a cost.

St. Paul speaks about this his hardships in his 2nd Letter to the Corinthians 11:25 - 27, where he writes: “Three times I was beaten with rods, once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; in toil and hardship, through many sleepless nights, hungry and thirsty, often without food, I was also cold and naked.”

But with all these hardships, Paul, being led by the Spirit of God, is attributed to having written 14 books of the New Testament, and in a span of 15 years, had three great Missionary journeys, which covered over 10,000 miles, So much for the cost of discipleship and its rewards.

Whenever someone is called unto the Lord and accepts His invitation, one’s spiritual journey officially begins. It has been said: “There ain’t no such things as a free lunch,” a phrase which is believed to have originated in 19th American saloons, where free lunches were given when a customer ordered drinks. Discipleship demands sacrifice.

Think for a moment about the meaning of this phrase and how it applies to life. As an example: in life, to be a great athlete or musician of any value, to be an author, a painter or a poet. it takes commitment, dedication and it takes a lot of hard work and sacrifice to achieve success.

Being a “true disciple” of Jesus is no different, but it is so much more important. When an athlete trains for the Olympics, they seek, as their prize, a “gold medal”, while the prize of being a “true disciple” of Jesus, is the reward and the assurance of eternal life. For this He “clear the debt.”

Towards the end of Paul’s life, while he was imprisoned in Rome and awaiting his fate, which culminated in his martyrdom in c. 64 AD, during the reign of Nero, Paul wrote these words to Timothy, a young priest and later Bishop at Ephesus “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

To take up one’s cross, like Jesus, is also the reality, to follow Jesus, and calls Him Lord, our Rabbi, our teacher and Savior, It does not take away the “hardships” of life, but in hardships, we are strengthened through His word., to carry on,

Peter in his 1st Letter writes in 2:25, “For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.”

Peter refers to Jesus as the “Shepherd of our souls” as we read that Peter through his own crucifixion, taught us that there is “One Lord” choosing according to history and tradition, of being crucified upside down.

You know, I believe that Jesus was teaching us that a mother, a father, a wife, one’s children, a brother, or a sister, cannot bring about our salvation. I believe it is only in knowing the Lord, knowing and trusting in His Word, that we are given the saving grace from God.

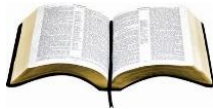
Jesus reminds us in John 17:3, of this grace, as He prayed unto the Father at the Last Supper:

“[Father] this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ: There is a difference between being a disciple of Jesus and a “true disciple of Jesus.” Some may claim to follow Jesus, but like a poker game, they are not “all in.”

A “true” disciple of the Lord is one who has like Peter, Paul, the Apostles, the saints, and the martyrs, have left “all” to follow Him.

It is someone who Paul describes in his letter to the Romans 10:9, who is at the starting gate of becoming a true disciple unto Christ: “if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” May we continue to strive to be “true disciples” unto the Lord, and commit ourselves unto Him daily, now and in our days to come.



STUDIES IN SCRIPTURE

THE TWO BOOKS OF KINGS

Originally, the two OT books of Kings were one book. They cover the history of God’s chosen people from the death of King David to the downfall of Jerusalem and captivity of the Jews in 597 BC by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. Now these two books, cover the following:

- The reign of Solomon (1 Kings 1:1-11).
- The history of the two kingdoms: Israel and Judah (1 Kings 12:1 – 2 Kings 17).
- The history and downfall of the Northern Kingdom and the overthrow of the Davidic dynasty by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 18-25).

It is also believed that 1st & 2nd Kings were written by the prophet Jeremiah and is in the same style as 1st and 2nd Chronicles, also considered historical.

So, what led to the downfall of Judah? In Holy Scripture, we learn that the king of Northern Kingdom, Rehoboam, mistreated the Jewish citizens in his kingdom and King Solomon in the south, added to this division. This division is believed to have foster many of the writings of the major and minor prophets of God.

Kings 1 and Kings 2, An overview

Source: Master Study Bible, NASB, Holman 1977

1. The reign of King Solomon: 1 Kings 1-4
2. The building of the first temple: 1 Kings 5-7
3. The first temple dedicated: 1 Kings 8
4. The Queen of Sheba: 1 Kings 10
5. Solomon’s sins and fall: 1 Kings 11
6. Disruption of the two kingdoms: 1 Kings 12
7. Consequences of this disruption: 1 Kings 13-14
8. The rivalry between the two kings and the beginning of the schism: 1 Kings 15-16
9. Elijah: God’s prophet: 1 Kings 17- 2
10. Elisha: a man of God: 2 Kings 3-13
11. The 2nd century of the schism: 2 Kings 14-17
12. The kingdom of Judah standing alone: 2 Kings 18-25.



THURSDAY, JULY 2nd

SOLEMNITY OF THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED MOTHER MARY

On this solemnity, we celebrate the day when the blessed Mother Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, who were both with child. It should also be noted that they were related through the “bloodline” of King David, the “root of Jesse,” of whom Isaiah 11:10 prophesied about concerning the coming Messiah.

We read of this special visitation in Gospel of Luke, Luke 1:39–56:

“During those days, Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord¹ should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your

greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

What was to follow, as recorded in Luke 1:46-55 was Mary’s response to Elizabeth which has come to be known as “The Magnificat” or the “Canticle of Mary.”

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for He has looked with favor
on the lowliness of His handmaiden.
Surely, from now on
all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is His name.
His mercy is for those who fear Him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered the proud
in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful
from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped His servant Israel,
in remembrance of His mercy,
according to the promise
He made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to His descendants forever.”

We \ read in verse Luke 1:56 that Mary remained with Elizabeth for three months and then returned to her home in Nazareth.

Let us pray: Eternal Father, you inspired the Virgin Mother to visit her cousin Elizabeth. May we always be guided by Your Spirit and give unto our praise that is due. May we magnify You in our daily lives. Amen.



JULY 4TH – OUR INDEPENDENCE
By Rev. Fr. Koerber

“And you shall know the Truth and the Truth will set you free.” – John 8:32

“Give me liberty or give me death.” Spoken by Patrick Henry in a speech he delivered at the Second Continental Congress of Virginia on March 23, 1775, at St. John's Church in Richmond, Virginia.

On July 4, 1776, the “Declaration of Independence” composed by Thomas Jefferson, who was to become the third President of our great Nation, was approved was signed by the 56 delegates who had gathered at the Second Continental Congress held at Freedom Hall in Philadelphia, PA.

This “Declaration of Independence” explained why the thirteen original colonies, who were at war with Great Britain, regarded themselves as thirteen independent and sovereign states, no longer to be under British rule. With this Declaration of Independence, these new states took a collective first step toward the forming of the United States of America.

Merriam-Webster defines “independence” as: “free from outside control; not depending on another's authority,” and the word “freedom” is defined as: “the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.”

The story of the beginning of our nation is a history filled with much struggle and hardships. From the opening battles of Lexington and Concord, to Bunker Hill; from the hardships of the Continental Army at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777, to the many battles that were fought between the Colonialists and the “Red Coats” over 5 years, it was not until, the surrender of the British General Charles Cornwallis at Yorktown, Virginia on October 19, 1781, that our independence was truly won..

As we celebrate this 4th of July, I think of the many “Sons of Liberty” such as Dr. Joseph Warren, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Paul Revere, Patrick Henry and others who came to believe in the freedom as expressed by Patrick Henry: who said In 1775; “Give me liberty or give me death.”

I do not know how many of you have ever read the Declaration of Independence, but I believe every American should read this great document at least once in their lifetime, for it is the foundation of our democracy. This document begins with these words:

"When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them."

These opening words would serve as the belief of those who signed this document; that a man's right to freedom from tyranny and oppression was a God given right.

I believe that what followed, as found in the Preamble of this document, was the core of this right of independence and freedom:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Unfortunately, in 1776 and even to this day, there are many Americans who do not believe that all men are created equal, which is shown in the way that people talk to one another and treat each other.

It should also be understood that slavery and the enslavement of people was an accepted economic practice in the south, and the crimes, treatment and bartering of a fellow human being, were one of the darkest marks on our nation.

This injustice continued until President Abraham Lincoln issued the "Emancipation Proclamation" on September 22, 1862, at a time when our nation was embroiled in the middle of a "great civil war."

This proclamation officially took effect on January 1, 1863. It is where Lincoln declared "that all people held as slaves" within the rebellious states during the Civil War are, and henceforth shall be free."

At the dedication of the National cemetery in Gettysburg, PA on November 19, 1863, President

Abraham Lincoln recalls the beginning of this declaration of independence:

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

As a reader and lover of American history, I am saddened and disappointed, that there is so much anger and division in our nation; that we stand at a crossroad of losing the concept of "democracy," which brought our nation together by our founding fathers.

We must always remember this 4th of July and strive to remember, that the early founders of this great democracy, were called upon to be the "United" and not the "Divided" States of America. Whatever political affiliation and thought process one may possess, we should stop, put aside politics, even for but a day, come together and celebrate a mutual freedom and democracy that so many other nations desire to have.

Also, as a lover of biographies, I read that the 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, kept a Holy Bible on his desk, which was a source of comfort and inspiration. One of his best-known quotes comes directly from the Gospel according to Saint Mark 3:25 when he spoke: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." It was in 1858 that Lincoln spoke these words, speaking against slavery that would eventually divide our nation and bring about the American Civil War starting in 1860.

I think about the non-violent philosophy of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who patterned many of his sermons and beliefs after the life of Mahatma Gandhi of India, another proponent of non-violence. Gandhi began, as a lawyer and a civil rights activist back in 1914 and continued to protest against British colonial rule until India won its independence from England on August 15, 1947. Known as the "Father of India," Gandhi strove to unite Hindu and Moslems in peace & harmony. He would be assassinated.

As we celebrate our 4th of July independence, amid all the celebrations, cookouts and the fireworks, may we never forget the words found as

found in the Pledge of Allegiance, which centers on each of us and serves as an inspiration for what it truly means to be an American:

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all,”

On a side note: The Pledge of Alliance was composed by a Baptist minister, Francis Bellamy who was born in Chicopee, MA, was formally recognized by Congress in 1942.

My dear brothers and sisters: The word “indivisible” means “not to be divided” and therefore to be in reality, one nation. May we all pray to be enlightened, that in our souls, we may all learn to grow and live in peace and harmony with one another for the greater good and in the ideals that liberty and justice should be for all and not just for some. Amen.



250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES

A lot has happened in the history of our great country in 250 years, which is about four generations.

We honor first, our families who created this “melting pot” of our society, in various ways.

From all these cultures, we have come to enjoyed pizza, hot dogs, hamburgers, as well as chow mein & sushi and of course pierogi and gabaki, being of Polish ethnicity. I haven’t mentioned about all the beers and liquors which each culture brought to America.

As a lover of history, I am interested in what has happened in our 250 years.

From the Revolutionary War to the American Civil War; from WW 1 to WW 2, from Korea & Vietnam, through the streets of Fallujah and to Ramadi; and even to our present conflict in Iran, our history has been and will be well recorded.

From the concepts of “all men are created equal,” as found in our “Declaration of Independence,” of 1776, to the “Emancipation of Proclamation” issued by our 15th President, Abraham Lincoln during the American Civil War, in 1863; from the Civil Rights Movement of the 60’s to the Gay Rights Movement, beginning officially in 1969, our nation has had its struggles.

I believe that it is impossible for anyone who can speak of all the various aspects of our great “Republic,” which had its genesis 250 years ago, and who finds itself in today’s global influence.

The celebration of our 250 years, is a tribute to all its people, who came as immigrants to America, like my grandparents; who came on transport ships, and many who saw the Statue of Liberty for the first time, which marked for them a new beginning and a new life.

On a side note: Ellis Island, which served as a “gateway” for over 12 million immigrants, officially closed on November 12, 1954 and serve today as a museum and a reminder

As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of our country, as citizens of this great land, we share a common “National Anthem” and a “Pledge of Allegiance.”

I have recently and continue to re-read and to reflect, upon the importance of the **“Declaration of Independence,” the “Constitution of the United States,” the “Bill of Rights” and “Common Sense”** written by a great American Patriot, Thomas Paine in 1776, a 47 page pamphlet who advocated an independence from England.

As we celebrate our special day of Independence Day this 4th of July, amid all its celebrations, the picnics and the fireworks, let us thank God for being our life as an American citizen.

Prayer

I believe that prayer is a “doorway” by which we come to know our “union” with Christ. Unfortunately, we are so distracted daily by so many external factors that the beauty and the essence of knowing our true nature from within is lost. May we all come and be thankful in “prayer.”