

My Beloved Ones,

I greet you with love and joy in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I pray that the upcoming 4th of July holiday will be a time, not only of rest and relaxation, but will also include quiet reflection of the meaning of this national day of celebration.

The Fathers of this great country understood the importance of faith in God, and in the traditions that faith provide the people of any nation. It is for these very reasons that Thomas Jefferson—the distinguished statesman, and future President of the United States—begins the Declaration of Independence from Great Britain by referencing “...*the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them...*”

Indeed, in defending this very new concept of breaking from the domination of a mother country such as Britain, Jefferson does not seek to make his case with earthly reasons alone; he defends the decision to begin a Revolution by reminding the readers that these principles come not from Man, but God: “*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. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...*”

In an age of great discovery, when men were questioning all things that had had previously been accepted, let it be said that the Founders did not abandon their faith. When the President George Washington later decided to step aside after two terms, he wrote his great Farewell Address, where he discussed his hopes for the country he helped lead—as well as many of the things he learned. In the address, he wrote, “*Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports... Let it simply be asked: Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion...reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.*”

Tomorrow, I pray that you are able to, as part of your day of celebration, offer praise and Thanksgiving to our Creator, who enlightened such men to understand that it is from God that we owe everything, especially life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta

