

6th Sunday of Easter – May 25/26, 2019 – Reflection for Memorial Day Weekend

In the early summer of 1776, Thomas Jefferson was charged by other colonists seeking to sever ties with king and Mother England with writing the case for independence to put before the American people. He wrote:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable 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, - That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

On July 4th of that year, this Declaration of Independence was ratified in Philadelphia and a new nation was born. That national sovereignty would only be gained after a long war fought for independence, only after much blood was spilled for the cause, only after many lives were sacrificed so that a free and United States of America might exist.

The America of today is the child of those lofty ideals, though she has never fully lived up to them for all her people. The America of today exists because of the sacrifices made and blood shed of countless

thousands of patriots who were willing to give their lives for unknown others, to pay the price for freedom, even a freedom not yet fully realized, so that the idea of America might continue to grow and flourish like a bright shining beacon of liberty in a dark, stormy sea sailed by despots and dictators lording it over poor, tired, huddled masses longing to be free.

It is fitting and right that we, who owe our freedoms to the high ideals of the Founders and to the brave Americans who paid the last full measure of devotion in defending them, should remember their vision and their sacrifices often, but especially on this day, as we thank them and bless them for their service.

My fellow Christians, yes, we are citizens of this noble land founded upon such high principles and defended, even to the death, by the blood shed by brave men and women. But Christians, we have our citizenship in heaven. We follow a Commander who does not lead from behind, astride a white steed, safely away from the heat of the battle. We follow Jesus Christ who came not to be served but to serve, to give His life as a ransom for the many. He was nailed to the Cross that we might be free from the tyranny of sin. He rose from the dead that we might rise to a new life of freedom. He sends us on mission to hold high the banner of the Cross and call all men to the true freedom of the children of God.

Remember, He has given everything, the last full measure of devotion in service to us, unworthy though we may be.

Each week we gather here at the foot of the Cross to thank Him for his service, but for so great a sacrifice, are mere words enough ...

"Thank You for Your service"?? The Son of God, my Captain, my

Commander, gave His life for me, that I might live in freedom. In return, my gratitude would be my willingness to thank Him for His life by offering mine in service to Him and to the Gospel.

"Lord, even if the rest would leave You, I would never! I would give my life for You."