CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Reflections on America....

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What is the truth of American History? Does she have a godly heritage? And if yes, what does that mean to you and me?

On July 4, 1821, John Quincy Adams, our sixth President stated, "The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity."

On July 4, 1837, he made the same basic observation again – this time with even greater emphasis, "Why is it that, next to the birthday of the Savior of the world, your most joyous and venerated festival returns on this day?

Is it not that, in the chain of human events, the birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birthday of the Savior? That it forms a leading event in the progress of the Gospel dispensation? Is it not that the Declaration of Independence first organized the social compact on the foundation of the Redeemer's mission upon earth? That it laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity?"

John Quincy Adams was the son of John and Abigail Adams – our second president and first lady. Young Quincy grew up in the very midst of the American Revolution. He learned of it with his own eyes. He saw the great cost his father, (and so many others), had to bear to usher in God's greatest gift, freedom.

The human soul yearns for it, and it is our solemn duty to preserve it. More so, it remains our duty to define and defend that which comprises true freedom: Freedom of Religion, Expression, Equal Justice under the Law, the Sanctity of the Home and the Reservation of the Powers to the People. Ronald Reagan was right when he observed, "Freedom is a fragile thing and is never more than one generation away from extinction.

It is not ours by inheritance; it must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation, for it comes only once to a people. Those who have known freedom and then lost it have never known it again."

Freedom is a basic necessity to the human soul. It is almost as critical as food and water. Without freedom, the human spirit (the innermost part of man) begins to slowly wither and die. Where does freedom come from? Have we forgotten its true source?

James 1: 16, 17 states, "Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." Freedom is both God's gift and His idea. Nothing is more certainly written in the Book of Books than the fact that He "came to set the captives free."

America has a rich, free and godly history and I could endlessly quote great patriots like Patrick Henry, who, on March 23, 1775, at the Second Virginian Convention stated, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity and freedom of worship here." But the questions America seems to be asking today is not where have we come from, but rather where are we going.

If America does indeed have a godly heritage, does it affect us still? I believe the answer is yes, because without it, America would not have been the freest nation in history. In 1831, French philosopher, writer and statesman Alexis De Tocqueville came to America, seeking to understand why America has been so exceptional and why France, with all its "enlightenment" had not. His magnum opus, Democracy in America (1835 and 1840), is still considered to be one of the greatest historical/ philosophical/ political works in American History. The primary focus of Democracy in America was an analysis of why republican representative democracy had succeeded in the United States while failing in other places. He reached the following conclusion, "I sought for the greatness of the United States in her commodious harbors, her ample rivers, her fertile fields, and boundless forests--and it was not there. I sought for it in her rich mines, her vast world commerce, her public school system, and in her institutions of higher learning--and it was not there. I looked for it in her democratic Congress and her matchless Constitution--and it was not there. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great!"

So we do indeed have a godly, Christian Heritage. And from the "Great Awakening" of Revolutionary Era Preachers like George Whitefield right up until this present hour, the church has played a critical role in shaping the very character of America. As De Tocqueville noted, her pulpits would "flame with righteousness," and it was our goodness that made us great. Ask yourself a few questions today: Do we still focus on the godly elements of American history? Do we focus on that which brings true freedom? Have we Americans lost something in this present information age – our modern epoch? If the answers to any of those questions are not what you think it ought to be, then what can you do, today, to make it better? God bless you and thank you for reading.

God bless our beloved America.

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General Protestant
Sunday, 9 a.m., Greer Chapel
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Catholic Mass
Saturday, 2 p.m., Greer Chapel
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Sunday, 2 p.m., Greer Chapel
(Confessions at 1:30 p.m.)

For Jewish, Latter-day Saints and Muslim services, please contact the Post Chaplain for assistance at 558-2378.

Lutheran
Sunday, 8 a.m., St. John Lutheran Church, 2001 Hardy Street, 601-583-4898.

OFF POST
*Transportation provided for Jewish, Episcopal, Lutheran, Muslim services ONLY (due to time scheduling) Units are responsible for arranging transportation by calling 601-558-2622.

Latter-day Saints
Sunday, 9 a.m., Latter-day Saints Meeting House, 1618 Broadway Dr., 601-268-2438/ Hall: 601-268-9706. Contact the Post Chaplain.

Episcopal
Sunday, 8 a.m., Trinity Episcopal, 509 West Pine St., 601-544-5551

Jewish
Friday at Temple B'Nai Israel at 801 Mamie Street, 601-545-3871. Every Friday at 6 p.m.

Muslim
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