



The Baptism, sacrament of dying and rising with Christ

The 13th Sunday of the Year

at Lancaster St Bernadette and Bremen St Mary

July 2, 2017

St Bernadette Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE (740) 654 • 1893
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701

St Mary Parish

602 Marietta Street (740) 569 • 7929
BREMEN, OH 43107

stbernadetteparish.net

cover painting: **The Baptism**, oil on canvas, painted (1755) by Pietro Longi (1702-1785)

This painting is a reflection on the passage in today's second reading, where Paul tells us 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."
Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice

our parishes

Father Thomas Kessler (614) 634-0499
pastor wnthomaskessler@icloud.com

at St Bernadette Parish

<http://stbernadetteparish.net>

Mark Scarpitti (740) 438-3970
deacon dcn.mark@frontier.com

Jeff Carpenter (740) 681-9918
deacon carpenter.277@osu.edu

Ann Essman (740) 653-9347
pastoral minister aessman001@att.net

Steve Huber (740) 654-3137

facilities coordinator shuber57@yahoo.com

Liz Latorre (740) 243-1872
liturgical music lizlatorre@gmail.com

The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.

Hours are: 9 am-1 pm, MWThF; 11 am-1 pm, Tu.
1343 Wheeling Rd NE,
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 (740) 654-1893

at Bremen St Mary Parish

Ben Factor
liturgical music b_factor@lancaster.k12.oh.us

The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule.

Hours are 9-11 am, Tu.
602 Marietta St,
Bremen, OH 43107 (740) 569-7929

at both parishes

Stephen Karnes (740) 654-1893
bookkeeper stbernbook@gmail.com

Kathy Kehnast (740) 654-1893
pastoral coordinator stbernparish@yahoo.com

Angie & Kent Kerns (740) 654-2588
religious education kwkerns@gmail.com

Julie & Chase Stalford (740) 808-7294
youth ministry maristellspirit@gmail.com

at St Bernadette School

Pam Eltringham peltring@cducation.org
principal

Barb Huber bhuber@cducation.org
secretary

Saint Bernadette School is located at
1325 Wheeling Rd, (740) 654-3137
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701

www.stbernadetteschool.com

stbernlan@cducation.org

sacramental life

Baptism

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnast will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. Try to take the class before the child is born. If you are expecting, call Kathy to register for the class.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; those parents are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. Both godparents need to be practicing Catholics. If you don't attend Sunday Mass regularly (a major component of being a practicing Catholic), there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass.

Penance

The priest is available for Penance

- at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
- at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

In addition to Advent and Lenten Penance Services, every Catholic priest is available whenever there is a need. There are Penance opportunities for parochial school children **four times during the year so that they will learn the beauty of frequent confession**. The Church's law requires us to receive the sacrament of Penance at least once a year.

Anointing and Care of the Sick

The Sick receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick when dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age. We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you for "health of mind and body."

And, we are happy to bring Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the homes or hospitals of the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long since the sacraments were last available.

Holy Matrimony

Couples wishing to marry should contact the parish office six months before they wish to celebrate the sacrament. Why so long? Because **this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation**. And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation.

Remember, Catholics who marry outside the Church have left the sacramental life and need to change that situation before receiving the other sacraments.

The Church wishes to support couples **through the years** of their married life. That's why our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn about these programs, watch the weekly bulletin.

praying with the Church

at Mass today

O God, who, through the grace of adoption, chose us to be children of light, grant, we pray, that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

with the pope in july: for lapsed christians

That our brothers and sisters who have strayed from the faith, may rediscover, through our prayer and witness to the Gospel, the merciful closeness of the Lord and the beauty of the Christian life.

God's word ... at sunday Mass

<i>Sunday, July 2,</i> <i>13th Sunday</i>	2 Kings 4:8-16 Romans 6:3-11	Psalm 89 Matthew 10:37-42
<i>Sunday, July 9,</i> <i>14th Sunday</i>	Zechariah 9:9-10 Romans 8:9-13	Psalm 145 Matthew 11:25-30

... during the week

<i>Mon, July 3</i>	Ephesians 2:19-22	Ps 117	John 20:24-29
<i>Tues, July 4</i>	Genesis 19:15-29	Ps 26	Matthew 8:23-27
<i>Weds, July 5</i>	Genesis 21:5-20	Ps 34	Matthew 8:28-34
<i>Thurs, July 6</i>	Genesis 22:1-19	Ps 115	Matthew 9:1-8
<i>Fri, July 7</i>	Genesis 23:1-24:67	Ps 106	Matthew 9:9-13
<i>Sat, July 8</i>	Genesis 27:1-29	Ps 135	Matthew 9:14-17

let us adore Him

Spend a **holy hour** with our Lord in the presence of his Blessed Sacrament in either of our parish churches. Or spend a **few holy minutes**. We try to keep both churches open all through the daylight hours. Anybody can come, any time. Perhaps you could.

feast days this week

- July 3 St **Thomas** the apostle
- July 4 *Independence Day*
- July 5 St **Anthony Zaccaria**, priest;
St **Elizabeth of Portugal**
- July 6 St **Maria Goretti**, virgin and martyr

in both parishes

has your address changed?

Inform the St Bernadette or Bremen St Mary parish office when the members of your household or your home, mailing, or email address changes. If you are a new parishioner you need to fill out a **new parishioner registration form** online.

envelopes for youth

Children and youth have *a responsibility to support the Church*. Most of them don't have access to much money (or do they?), so their contributions are necessarily small. But this is the time to teach them their responsibility. Contribution envelopes are ready to be picked up in the school vestibule at St Bernadette and the main entry vestibule of St Mary.

an unusual Mass schedule this week

Father Kessler will be on vacation from soon after 11:00 Mass on Sunday the 2nd until shortly before 3:00 Confessions on Saturday the 15th. But Father Bill Donnelly, an Augustinian priest from Philadelphia, will be here during some of that time to ask your support of the missions. He will celebrate Mass at the usual times on Thursday evening (6 July), Friday morning (7 July), at all the Sunday Mass times (on Saturday and Sunday) and Monday morning (10 July). Please welcome him. And please pray for the pastor on his R&R.

augustinian mission appeal

The Augustinian Friars, a Catholic religious order founded in 1256, came to Philadelphia in 1796 to minister to the Irish immigrants. In the mid eighteen hundreds, the Catholic newcomers were harassed by the nativists, who were formed into a group called the "Know Nothings." Their anti-Catholic bigotry led to the torching of St Augustine's Church in 1844. From those flames came the decision to relocate their seminary a few miles outside Philadelphia in order to protect the young Augustinians from the city violence. And from this move came the founding of Villanova College. In more recent years they have served foreign missions in Japan and Peru.

Father William Donnelly, OSA will be at our parishes from July 5 to July 10 and will speak at the Sunday Masses sharing the story of the friars serving the poor and often forgotten of the world. He will ask our financial and spiritual support for his Augustinian brothers in these missions. Please share generously of the blessings which God has bestowed upon you.

christian initiation

Speaking of spreading the word about our Catholic Christian faith, have you invited someone yet **to join the Church in the coming year? Will you help them by accompanying them through the RCIA process?** It begins soon after the feast of the Assumption, Aug 15. So we need to get a move on.

peter's pence

Thank you for your generosity to last week's collection for Peter's Pence, which provides Pope Francis with the funds he needs to carry out his charitable works around the world. The proceeds benefit our brothers and sisters on the margins of society, including victims of war, oppression, and disasters. For information, visit www.usccb.org/peters-pence.

at st bernadette parish

Mass intentions at st bernadette

Thursday,	July 6	6:00 PM	Wilford & Loretta Beiter
Friday,	July 7	8:20 AM	Mark Dreyer

On Sundays the Mass intention of the pastor is the well-being of the people of the parish.

st bernadette 2017 foundation grants

"As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."

1 Peter 4:10

St Bernadette Parish has been blessed with funding from our endowments stewarded by The Catholic Foundation. By God's varied grace we honor the many donors, whose charitable love for

our faith and others is fulfilling the mission of our ministry through The Catholic Foundation. This Spring we have received disbursements of \$11,000 from our school endowment and \$7,619 from the parish endowment. These funds are vital for cash flow in

our parish. For information on ways your end-of-life estate planning can build our endowments, please visit catholic-foundation . org or call (866) 298-8893.

ministry at Mass at st bernadette

	lector	Servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion		
Saturday, 4:00 PM	Becky Kuhn	Samantha Kerns, Logan & Tori Loy	Bob & Angie Christy	Susan Garrett Marguerite Grimm	Jim Kuhn Kathy Wagner
Sunday, July 2, 11:00 AM	Amy Woo	Caroline Messerly, Addy Myers, Daniel Turner	Patrick Gins Ben Peters	John & Teresa Hartig	Jim & Rita Merk
Monday, 8:20 AM	NO MASS TODAY				
Wednesday, 8:20 AM	NO MASS TODAY				
Thursday, 6:00 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Gunner & Amelia Robertson	Lee Guinan	Paul Lonergan	
Friday, 8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Becca Fuller & Daschel Neighbor	Jim Merk	Rita Merk	
Saturday, 4:00 PM	Brad Rider	Abby, Mary & Sam Frazier	Terry Carpenter Rosalie DeFillippo	Kathy Kehnast Denise McGuire	Craig Shaw Mickey Steyaert
Sunday, July 9, 11:00 AM	Teresa Scarpitti	Dominic & Emeline Neighbor, Brennan Quaintance	Nancy Griffith Larry Sanford	Anna Seigny David Shonk	Becky Wickham Amy Woo

at st mary parish

summer square dances

Summer means square dancing at Schmelzer's Grove. Mark your calendars on the Sunday evenings of July 9 and Aug 13 from 7-9:30 PM. Admission is \$4 per person.



ministry at Mass at st mary

July 2 & July 9	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday 8:30 AM	Susan Foltz	Spencer Conrad, Charles Schoenlaub	Susan Foltz, Jim Schmelzer, Tyna Fox-Schmelzer	James Noll Jr family	Jim Schmelzer
next Sunday	Paul Kunkler	Carly Kunkler, Sydnee Rogers	Neil Boch, Wyatt Borah, Irene Kunkler	Paul Kunkler family	Joe Young

in the diocese of columbus

take a fresh look at your marriage

Treat yourselves to a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend and enrich your lives together. Marriage Encounter is 44 hours when married couples can get away from jobs, kids, chores, and phones—and focus only on each other. The next weekend in central Ohio is Sept 15-17. For information or to apply, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit [www . wmmecolumbus . org](http://www.wmcecolumbus.org).

helping moms who have chosen life

Angels Nurture & Disciple (“AND”) Inc is a pro-life organization that seeks to inspire, empower, and facilitate significant improvement in the educational, career, financial, and spiritual well-being of **single mothers who have chosen life** for their children. Visit us at [angelsand . org](http://angelsand.org) to learn more. To volunteer or support, contact Gina McCauley at [gina @ angelsand . org](mailto:gina@angelsand.org) or (440) 749-5477.



Mass intention at st mary

There will be no Tuesday morning Mass at St Mary in Bremen this week. On Sundays the Mass intention of the pastor is the well-being of the people of the parish.

st vincent de paul at bremen

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Bremen takes up a **collection after Mass on the first Sunday** of every month. **New members** are always welcome. Call Angi Skinner at (740) 438-0027.

catholic men's ministry

Now, more than ever, we need Catholic Male Leadership. Weekly Faith Sharing groups have been instrumental in bringing men together and fostering growth in their Catholic faith. Programs like “Iron Sharpens Iron” and “That Man Is You!” continue to grow throughout the Columbus Diocese and are changing lives. Get plugged in and learn more about the many programs and opportunities that are available. Visit [http:// www . catholicmensministry . com/iron](http://www.catholicmensministry.com/iron) today.

healing Mass at saint joseph cathedral

A Mass of healing will be celebrated on Monday, July 17, at 6:30 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral in Columbus. Following the Mass, a service of healing begins with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, veneration of a relic of the true cross of Christ, and an opportunity for each person to speak individually with a priest and receive prayers of healing; the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is also available. The service closes with Benediction. Call the Cathedral with questions at (614) 224-1295.

from the chair

Tune in to St Gabriel Catholic Radio AM 820 on Tuesday, July 4. Bishop Campbell re-broadcasts the High School Student Forum from 5 - 6 PM.

a ministry job opening

St Timothy Church is accepting resumes for a full-time coordinator of youth ministry, responsible for their religious formation of parish middle school and high school youth. Send a letter, resume and references to Rita Marie Feige, director of religious education, Saint Timothy Church, 1088 Thomas Lane, Columbus, OH 43220

saint mother teresa award

FOR CHARITY, COMPASSION AND SERVICE

This new award recognizes those special women in our diocese who exemplify the life of Christ and the spirit of Mother Teresa: women who are strong in their Catholic faith, who are engaged and involved in their parish communities, and whose example of devotion and dedication is in the tradition and spirit of this holy and humble saint. The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women will celebrate the contributions of these women on Aug 27 at 4:30 PM at Immaculate Conception Parish. For information about nomination, tables, or tickets, contact the DCCW Office at (614) 228-8601 or mjmcormick@columbuscatholic.org. To acknowledge a woman in your parish with your nomination, write about 250 words describing her spirituality and all the ways this woman demonstrates those unique attributes reminiscent of Mother Teresa's life and ministry. Essays must be received by Aug 8 at the DCCW, 197 E. Gay St., Columbus, OH 43215.

project dawn

It is no secret that there has been an overwhelming surge in opiate overdoses and fatalities within our communities. Mount Carmel Outreach and the Mount Carmel Mobile Medical Coach have joined forces with Project DAWN (**Deaths Avoided With Naloxone**), a community-based overdose education and Narcan (naloxone) distribution program. The Project DAWN program provides Narcan kits free-of-charge to those without health insurance and limited financial means. Narcan is a **safe medication that can reverse an overdose caused by prescription pain medication or heroin** and save lives. For information, call (614) 546-4200.

men's silent retreat

The annual Catholic Laymen's Fall Silent Retreat will be held at St Therese Retreat Center from 6 PM on Friday, Sept 8, through noon Mass on Sunday, Sept 10. In reflection sessions, Fr Dave Pivonka, TOR, will lead men to appreciate the power of the Holy Spirit by developing his theme **To Have a Relationship with the Holy Spirit, His Mercy is Everlasting**. Cost is \$150. Make your reservation now and consider bringing a friend. Contact Charles Kielkopf at (614) 268-0175 or kielkopf.1@osu.edu.

women's retreat

Walking with Purpose presents **Retreat & Refresh: A Day of Renewal for a Woman's Soul** at Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center on Sunday, July 16, and Monday, July 17. Featured speaker will be Elizabeth Ficocelli. Prices are \$75 or \$95 for overnight semi-private or private room with breakfast and lunch, or \$50 for the day retreat including the two meals. RSVP by July 3 to Glenda Reynolds at (740) 974-7568 or g.reynolds15@yahoo.com

furniture to spare?

Are you moving or downsizing? The Sts Peter and Paul Retreat Center needs your gently used furniture. They could use couches, tables, chairs, and dining sets. Contact them at (740) 928-4246 or info @ stspeterandpaulretreatcenter.org.

marriage preparation volunteers

Looking for a way to serve in 2017? Engaged couples in our diocese need your help. Volunteer to serve on the diocesan **Marriage Preparation Team** as a speaker and presenter. Present virtues-based topics to engaged couples preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony. **If you are currently married, and have wisdom and experience to share**, you already qualify. For information, contact Kathleen Hall at khall@columbuscatholic.org or (614) 241-2560.

plan your family naturally

Natural family planning (NFP) uses modern scientific knowledge of fertility to allow married couples to safely and effectively achieve or postpone pregnancy. Today's NFP is up to 99% effective and completely natural. The benefits of NFP go beyond family planning; for articles and to read one couple's story visit www.ForYourMarriage.org. For information about NFP or to register for a diocesan NFP workshop, contact the Marriage and Family Life Office at 614/241-2560 or FLOMailbox@colsdioec.org.

the bishop's annual appeal

bishop's annual appeal 2017

"LIVING THE GOSPEL IN FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY"

The Bishop's Annual Appeal **has begun at St Bernadette and at St Mary**. It's time for us to do what we can to support the programs and ministries that benefit both our parishes and the wider community. The Appeal **supports our parish schools of religion and the education of our future priests and deacons, and many families in need of our help**. Your gift and your prayers will help to make this year's appeal a success. Every contribution counts; every dollar that we raise over the stated goal will be returned to our parishes to benefit our communities directly. Last year St Bernadette pledged slightly over and collected slightly under the goal. Bremen St Mary pledged well over the goal and has received the rebate of \$4,947 from the diocese. So we know we can do this if, after thoughtful consideration and prayer, every one of us gives according to our ability. We are blessed with much; let us remember the needs of others. **If you have not yet been able to make a pledge, extra BAA envelopes are available in the church vestibules.**

Here are the results at our parishes after eight weeks (seven weeks for the diocesan totals).

	St Bernadette	% of goal	Bremen St Mary	% of goal	Diocese of Columbus	% of goal
<i>total households</i>	452		130			
<i>households participating</i>	121	27%	49	39%		
<i>amount pledged</i>	\$ 35,930	85%	\$ 16,576	133%	\$6,393,564	98%
<i>average gift</i>	\$ 297		\$ 338			
<i>total paid</i>	\$ 17,210	41%	\$ 5,611	45%		
<i>BAA goal</i>	\$ 42,210		\$ 12,443		\$ 6,500,000	

the bishop says “thank you”

Bishop Campbell has sent his congratulations and thanks to St Mary Parish in Bremen for going beyond its goal in the 2017 Bishop’s Annual Appeal. The example of these parishioners inspires efforts to support those who are in great need, which builds upon a strong faith and has a lasting impact on the future.

baa prayer

Heavenly Father, we are always thankful for all you have given us.

We are especially grateful
that you have sent to us your Son to be our Savior.

That is the true Good News:
that you love us and call us to yourself.

Help us to live this Good News, this Gospel,
in Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Help us to respond generously to your love
by sharing our material blessings
for the good of all in our diocese.

Send your Spirit to dwell in our hearts,
so that all we do may give praise and honor to your name.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

more things to think about

safe environment reminder

A complete copy of the **parish safe environment policies and procedures**, including the diocesan policies and guidelines for parish youth ministry is available by calling either parish office.

All adults who have not previously attended a **Protecting God’s Children training session sponsored by the diocese** of Columbus are urged to do so. A schedule of training sessions can be found at www.virtus.org.

Articles on **sexual abuse prevention** are available at www.virtus.org. All adults are encouraged to access this website monthly and read the articles. Contact information for **reporting suspected abuse of minors** is from the parish office.

fortnight for freedom

Each year dioceses around the country arrange special events to highlight the importance of defending religious freedom. The Fortnight for Freedom is the special dedication of the two weeks from June 21—the vigil of the Feasts of St John Fisher and St Thomas More—to July 4, Independence Day.

Religious freedom is **our first, most cherished liberty** is a time when our liturgical calendar celebrates a series of **great witnesses who remained faithful even to death in the face of persecution by political power**: St Thomas More and St. John Fisher, St John the Baptist, Sts Peter and Paul, and the First Martyrs of the Church of Rome. To learn about the fortnight, visit www.fortnight4freedom.org.

We are all called to follow Christ as missionary disciples by seeking the truth, serving others, and living our faith in all that we do. Please take a few moments each day from June 21-July 4 to pray, reflect, and take action on religious liberty, both here in this country and abroad.

pray for the protection of religious liberty

O God our Creator,
from your provident hand we have received
our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

You have called us as your people and given us
the right and the duty to worship you, the only true God,
and your Son, Jesus Christ.

Through the power and working of your Holy Spirit,
you call us to live out our faith in the midst of the world,
bringing the light and the saving truth of the Gospel
to every corner of society.

We ask you to bless us
in our vigilance for the gift of religious liberty.

Give us the strength of mind and heart
to readily defend our freedoms when they are threatened;
give us courage in making our voices heard
on behalf of the rights of your Church
and the freedom of conscience of all people of faith.

Grant, we pray, O heavenly Father,
a clear and united voice to all your sons and daughters
gathered in your Church
in this decisive hour in the history of our nation,
so that, with every trial withstood
and every danger overcome—
for the sake of our children, our grandchildren,
and all who come after us—
this great land will always be “one nation, under God,
indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

confessions & weekday Mass nearby ... these times sometimes change, though, so be sure to call ahead!

	<i>Bremen St Mary</i>	<i>Lancaster St Bernadette</i>	<i>Lancaster St Mary</i>	<i>Lancaster St Mark</i>	<i>Sugar Grove St Joseph</i>	<i>Circleville St Joseph</i>	<i>Logan St John</i>
<i>Monday</i>		8:20 AM	7 AM	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM	8 AM
<i>Tuesday</i>	8:20 AM		9 AM	8 AM	NOON	7 AM	8 AM
<i>Wednesday</i>		8:20 AM	7 AM	6 PM	6:30 PM	9 AM	9 AM
<i>Thursday</i>			9 AM	8 AM	NOON		
<i>Friday</i>		8:20 AM		8 AM	8 AM	9 AM	8 AM
<i>Saturday</i>		<i>9 AM Mass on 1st Saturday only</i>				10 AM	9 AM
<i>confessions</i>	Sunday @ 8AM	Thursday @ 5:30 PM Saturday @ 3 PM <i>& @ 8:30 AM on 1st Saturday only</i>	Saturday @ 4 PM	Saturday @ 5:30 PM	½ hour before Mass	Saturday @ 4 PM	Saturday @ 4 PM

What's the Big Deal about America?

An expression you may have heard recently in talk about our country is “**American exceptionalism.**” Those words might be a complaint or a brag. They may be a way of celebrating American superiority (military, economic, athletic, etc?) or of complaining about American arrogance (“the Great Satan” of some ayatollahs, the “Yankee” who must “go home”). Or, come to think of it, they may just be a neutral acknowledgement that we have been blessed in our prosperity and our (general) lack of experience of warfare in our homeland.

This **Fortnight for Freedom**, culminating on the Fourth of July, is a good time to think in both ways about how our country is exceptional: the way of humility and the way of pride. We should **count our blessings and also examine our consciences.** For there really is something out of the ordinary about the USA. Whether that is an opportunity or a problem—or both—, counting our blessings can't be ignored, especially not by Americans who are Catholics, and thus understand that **acknowledgement of blessing means awareness that someone has blessed us.** That leads both to gratitude and to an effort to put the blessing to good—to better—use.

There is one singular blessing that is also a singular challenge. It is our **intentional diversity.** We are a nation of people who came here from a wide variety of backgrounds and a great diversity of language, culture, and especially of religion. That is unusual in the history of mankind. The Native Americans have been here longer than anyone else. Then there were Spanish and French Catholics who mostly came by the way of the Caribbean, Mexico, or Quebec. They have come—and keep coming—in **many waves of immigration.** The early settlers of the East Coast were mostly British Protestants, some radical Protestants in New England and Pennsylvania, some more conventional Protestants eager for adventure and fortune, but there were also a few Catholics, especially in Maryland. Some of these brought Africans under compulsion to serve them as slaves. Most of my ancestors and probably most of yours came from elsewhere in Europe and mostly after those English Protestants who became the founders of the United States of America.

Some of the immigrants came centuries ago. **Some have arrived this very day.** There have been political and economic immigrants, even refugees, but also religious settlers who sought to escape religious persecution; and some have even determined to establish a new kind of religious community here. Some sought greater freedom and tranquility (like the Schmelzer family who did not want their many sons to become cannon fodder in the constantly recurring and seemingly pointless warfare of the early 19th century). **Whether they were in it for the profit, for security, for freedom, or for the sheer joy of the adventure,** they built America.

And they gradually mixed together and **had to learn to live together.** That's where Independence Day fits in. By 1776 the Eastern seaboard settlers, mostly people from British cultural and Protestant religious heritage, well-educated and magnificently led, determined to do an altogether new thing: **they decided to invent a new nation.** Nobody had ever done that. New states have grown up, new forms of government have been adopted. **But never did a people decide to make a new nation, and never by such a design.** This why our nation is sometimes called “the intentional nation”: it didn't just happen; some people made it happen, intentionally. Adjusting to the presence of people with quite different ways, especially different ways of encountering God, requires some effort. We Americans have been working on that for centuries now, but especially since we started up this new nation. We are still learning how it is done.

There is a simple but difficult thing we all have to determine to do if we are to make this country of ours continue to work. It is to treat each other with respect at the deepest level. This doesn't mean just being nice to one another or being tolerant of whatever they chose to do, whatever sins they choose to commit. We are a people of law. But **we are learning to respect the right of all the members of the nation to live according to the culture and the religion that they hold dear.** That means **insisting that the others respect our rights** in that regard as well.

That is actually a tall order. It isn't always easy. But **we must keep learning** to respect each other and to demand that we be respected by the others. This means **we will not allow anyone, not government nor fellow citizen, to force us to engage in practices that we cannot in conscience tolerate. We will not let anyone tell us that we ought to respect sin as virtue or to insist that we cooperate in sin to prove our tolerance.**

This Fortnight for Freedom, this Independence Day, please remember that **the most fundamental of our freedoms is connected with rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's.** This is our permanent task. We will respect that it is other people's task too, according to the lights of their own consciences. But we will not allow anyone to tamper with our freedom to do our duty to act in a way that is in accord with our Catholic Faith. **We will render to God what is God's.**

– Father Kessler

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