

Last Wednesday was the 4th of July, the day traditionally held as to when the Declaration of Independence was signed in Congress. In the preamble of the Declaration, we hear:

*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.*

Following the French and Indian War - also known as the Seven Year War - the British Crown had begun to seek ways to recoup its military expenses from the American Colonies. The colonists, on the other hand, were opposed to taxation by the British without representation in Parliament. The British began to send troops to the colonies in order to suppress local governments ... and the rest is, as they say ... history.

In summary, that is how 236 years ago, the American Revolutionary War began.

In the First Reading, we hear how the prophet Ezekiel was sent to the Israelites whom God calls "*rebels who have rebelled against me*".

In light of American history, we might wonder just what is so wrong with Israel rebelling against God? How can God not allow them their unalienable rights - most especially the pursuit of happiness?

Yet, as we heard in the Opening Prayer, our Savior Jesus Christ has "*raised up a fallen world*" and we - as the recipients of that gift - have been "*rescued from slavery to sin*".

In other words, the rebellion of the Israelites was not against any oppression from God, but rather it was a base desire to return to "*slavery to sin*" - or to turn a phrase, they made a declaration of dependence ... on sin ... to the point of becoming slaves to sin.

In the Gospel, we hear how Jesus was received by the people of his own village as He taught in their Synagogue. While no one in the village disputed the “*wisdom*” or “*mighty deeds*” of Jesus - they were stuck on What they thought He was ... and on Who they thought He was. After all, they watched Him grow up ... knew His relatives ... knew His Mother. But despite Jesus’ power in speech and deed - the villagers could not get past their mindset that Jesus was *only* a carpenter ... a commoner ... no different than anyone. Because of this - they were offended by Jesus ... and Jesus was amazed at their lack of Faith.

Which raises the questions - What does this mean for us? How do we know when we are living the Life of Faith? How do we know if we are living in the Freedom that is ours as children of God?

Again, we heard in the Opening Prayer that we have been “*raised up*” and “*rescued*” ... and in this, we should be filled with “*holy joy*” and receive “*eternal gladness*”.

And as St. Paul tells us in the Second Reading, despite any “*insults, hardships, persecutions, [or] constraints*” which may appear as “*weaknesses*” ... God’s “*grace is sufficient*” for us and God’s “*power is made perfect in [our] weakness.*”

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity - let us pray that we may embrace the Freedom we have received in Jesus Christ. May we hold onto the Truth - in the Person of Jesus Christ - and may our relationship with Him be self-evident in our lives. Let us tap into God’s infinite grace and mercy - which we receive through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit ... that we may be raised up to take hold of the gifts of holy joy and eternal gladness - our birthright as daughters and sons of God the Father ... redeemed and rescued by the Sacrifice and abasement of Jesus Christ ... and despite our weakness - may we be made perfect through the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.