

St Stephen's News

St Stephen's Anglican Church · Timonium, Maryland

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FROM THE RECTOR

Reflections on the meaning of the Fourth of July

The media has recently gleefully reported a shocking lack of patriotism among members of America's Millennial generation. Actually, the Millennials' lack of patriotism should in no way come as a shock. Indeed, it is entirely surprising any of them show a degree of patriotism.

Blame for the Millennials' lack of patriotism lies squarely at the door of America's education establishment. People can only be patriotic when they are aware there is something to be patriotic about. The Millennials have, with malice of forethought, been denied this privilege.

In a catastrophic betrayal of their responsibility to nation's youth, the Solons of U.S. education long ago abandoned teaching America's history in favor of a mishmash of questionable social theory, the main thrust of which is that the founders of the republic (hence the republic itself) were irredeemably corrupt.

The unfortunate consequence of this is that immigrants like myself are often far better acquainted with the nation's history, and far more appreciative of the workings of the U.S. Constitution, than many people born and supposedly educated here.

Indeed many of us – those who survived the Second World War, for example – were in fact grateful beneficiaries of America's altruistic self sacrifice and generosity.

Sad to relate many younger Americans are not only ignorant of the nation's history, they are even more ignorant of the historical context in which it was founded,

When the United States was formed as a representative republic, governed on democratic principles, Austria, and most German states, were members of the Holy Roman Empire; Russia was ruled by an empress, a/k/a the Autocrat of All the Russias; France was ruled by an absolute monarch; the Middle East was under despotic sway of the Sultan of Turkey, ruler of the Ottoman Empire; the Indian subcontinent was governed by the British East India Company; an emperor ruled China and Japan bowed to the will of a dictator called the Shogun.

Today, all but one of those great powers have been swept away – consigned to what some politician or the other once dubbed the trash can of history. The only one still in existence today was, back then, by far the least significant – a loose federation of 13 puny, impoverished states strung along the coastline of a vast land mass at the very edge of the known world.

Today the United States is far from puny. It is the most powerful nation in the world – more powerful than the Kingdom of France ever was, more powerful than China, more powerful than Japan; more powerful than even the Autocrat of All the Russias dreamed of being. It is rich, too – far more so than fabulously wealthy Sultan of Turkey.

Speculation as to why things should have turned out this way has, for much of this century, provided rich fodder for politicians, historians, economists, sociologists, psychologists, media hacks and bar room philosophers. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, a wide diversity of explanations for the phenomenon are on offer.

Some explanations cite the nature of the political structures of those now-vanished empires. It has been argued that monarchical and imperial systems of government are

inherently unstable and, thus, their collapse was quite inevitable.

It has been claimed the monarchies and empires were far too diverse ethnically speaking and, thus, susceptible to the nationalist aspirations of the subject peoples.

Other explanations hang on economic theory: America, it is claimed, enshrined in its constitution the fundamental right of its citizens to own and enjoy their private property; it fostered a vigorous and entrepreneurial capitalism – and this is what affords the Americans form of government its remarkable longevity.

None of these explanations withstand scrutiny. Monarchies and empires have been the way of government almost from the beginning of time. By the time our nation was founded the Holy Roman Empire had endured for 1,000 years; the Chinese empire for millennia longer than that. At its collapse, the Ottoman Empire was more than 300 years older than we are today.

Nor can ethnic diversity be considered destabilizing. The Roman Empire, a model of stability, in its day embraced the whole world. And the United States was even more ethnically diverse at its founding than the Holy Roman Empire. The racial argument simply doesn't cut the mustard. Nor does the economic argument. All of those long vanished empires fostered and promoted entrepreneurial capitalism.

Parish Prayer List

Our Prayer Chain offers prayer daily for people on the Prayer List as well as the guests of the Joseph Richey Hospice. To add a name to the prayer list, or to the visiting list, or to join the Prayer Chain, ring the parish office on 410 560 6776. -----

FOR RECOVERY: Timothy, Peter, June, Sarah, Betsy, Edie, Alan, Terry, Helen, Jim, Linda, John, Judy, Neal, Aida, Stephen, Nathan, Hobie, Betty, Helen, Eunice, Tom, Robert✕, David, Jan, Susie, Sophia, Bobby, Lee, Cary, Cour Marie, Joanna, Kendall, Ian, Gloria, June, John, David, Adrian, Michell, Aida, Mai, Al, Kathy, Jack, Lewey & Stephen

FOR LIGHT, STRENGTH & GUIDANCE: Stephen, Melba, Sam, Vinnie, Doug, Ian, Lisa, Carey, Cindy, Jacob, Casey , Beth, Erin and Aubery

ON ACTIVE SERVICE: Lt Alex Bursi, Capt. Charles Bursi, Lt Nicholas Clouse, USN; Lt Col. Harry Hughes; MSGT Michael Holter, USAF; Cpt Fiodor Strikovski, US Army.

Clues to the United States' remarkable prosperity lie in the Scripture readings appointed for Independence Day. The lesson for the epistle, for instance, is from the Book of Deuteronomy, the book in which Moses recapitulates the law God handed down to the Children of Israel during their wanderings in Sinai.

On the surface of things, it probably seems a trifle odd for the Church to have appointed a lesson from one of the most ancient books of The Bible to celebrate the Declaration of Independence of what is still – in terms of its political system and economic philosophy – the most modern state in the whole world.

What about the first Amendment – the "Wall of Separation" between Church and state? Actually, the words "wall of separation" appears nowhere in the Constitution or its amendments. In any event, our ancestors saw direct parallels between the governance of the United States and the governance of ancient Israel.

Contrary to modern superstition, a vast majority of this nation's

Founding Fathers held deep Christian convictions. Indeed, two thirds of them were Anglicans.

There is a very good reason why they chose to found a democratic republic (something that hadn't existed for over 2,000 years) rather than a constitutional monarchy – a system of government which, for all practical purposes, would have served them equally well.

Certainly, they wanted to establish a genuinely democratic government, but, as a consequence of their profound faith, they also wanted to establish a truly "godly" form of government.

The Covenant contained in Deuteronomy is a treaty of suzerainty between a king and a subject people. It is composed according to a legal formula employed in the region 1,500 years before Christ. God is the king and the Children of Israel are the subject people. And, in return, God assured them their nation would be blessed.

The lessons from the Book of Deuteronomy are read on Independence Day are intended to remind us that blessings also entail obligations. We're obliged, for example, to help the poor and down trodden; the fatherless and widowed. We are obliged to welcome the strangers in our land, remembering they have come here for the same reasons our ancestors came: to build a better life for themselves and their children.

Jesus in the Gospel tells us that, as Christians, we must go further than that: We must love our enemies and do good to those who persecute us. This isn't pie in the sky. We know it works. After all, our own parents and grandparents put it into practice.

At the end of the Second World War – for the first time in history – the victors helped the vanquished to rebuild. We helped Germany and Japan to rebuild their shattered cities and devastated

economies, but we did so not just with money, but by giving them a gift far more precious than gold – democratic governments modeled on our own.

We have shared our blessings and, in turn, God has blessed us. What the lessons appointed for Independence Day teach us is that as long as we continue to share our blessings we will continue to be blessed. GPH✳
FROM THE KNITTING CIRCLE

Come have a ball (of wool)

Are the cares of the world weighing on your shoulders? Here's a way to relax in friendly and interesting company and acquire, or simply improve, a useful skill that not only calms the fevered brow, but immeasurably adds to your popularity with your friends and neighbors.

Join us in the parsh library on Thursday mornings at 10.00 AM. You can't knit? Cindie Bake will teach you. Just set the time and place. Knitting is the most relaxing of pastimes. You'll have a ball.

FROM THE GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Help beautify the churchyard

The strip of grass along the entrance driveway has been cleared by Scott Taylor and his crew of volunteers. Now we are seeking perennial plants from home gardens to put in that space. Suggestions for plant donations are Stella D'Oro lily or other day lily, dusty miller, corabells, columbine and any other deer resistant plants.

St Stephen's Anglican Church

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Pastoral Care: 410 252 8674

www.ststeve.com

The Rev. Canon Guy P Hawtin, *Rector*
The Venerable Michael Kerouac, *Vicar*
The Rev. Michael Belt, The Rev. John Novicki and
The Rev. Robert Ludwig, *Associate Rectors*
The Rev. M Wiley Hawks, *Pastoral Care Chaplain*
Mrs Happy Riley, *Director of Pastoral Care & Wedding Coordinator*

SUNDAY SERVICES

8am: Said Eucharist
9.15am: Choral Eucharist (with Nursery & Church School)
11am: Choral Mattins (1st Sunday: Sung Eucharist)
6pm: Choral Evensong (as announced) –
evensong.ststeve.com

WEEKDAY SERVICES

Wednesday, 6pm: Evening Prayer
Friday, 12 noon: Healing Eucharist
Saturday, 5pm: Family Eucharist

Calendar of Events

WEEKLY

Monday, 6.30pm: Bridge Club
Tuesday, 7am: Fellowship Breakfast (Nautilus Diner)
Thursday, 10am: Knitting Circle
Friday, 10.30am: Bible Study

MONTHLY & SPECIAL

Parish Youth Play Group

Every Sunday After the 9.15 Eucharist

Silly Summer Suppers

The season starts on at 6.30 PM on Wednesday, July 12th

The Ladies Who Lunch

Wednesday, July 19th, 12.00 pm - 2.00 pm

McFaul's Iron Horse Tavern

call Sara Douglas to reserve a place 410-560-9026

Afternoon Tea

Thursday July 20th 2.00 - 4.00 pm

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