

PRAYING for The United States of America

God bless America sweet land that I love.

As we celebrate our Independence Day on July 4, we pause and remember that it is You, O Good God, Who has blessed us with this nation and peopled it with a variety of peoples and races and who through their labors, dedication and sacrifice have made it a great nation – one nation under God.

Continue to bless our nation just as You bless all nations. Let us continually remember Your abiding presence with us and recall what You, O God, ask of us, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly before You.

**While the storm clouds gather far across the sea,
Let us swear allegiance to a land that's free,
Let us all be grateful for a land so fair,
As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer.**

Hymn: God Bless America

**God Bless America,
Land that I love.**

**Stand beside her, and guide her
Thru the night with a light from above.
From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans, white with foam
God bless America, My home sweet home.**



A Prayer for Our Country

Almighty and ever-living God, we humbly praise you for the nation in which you have allowed us to live. We cherish its wonder and its beauty. We are thankful for its fruitful lands, its bountiful waters, its great resources and its unlimited opportunities.

We thank you for our founding fathers and mothers, and for their foresight, special wisdom, and steadfast courage in establishing freedom and a lasting document of fairness.

Stir up within each of us the will to be good stewards of all the blessings of the land we love. Amen.

May freedom be seen, not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to please to do what is right. May it ever be understood that our liberty is under God and can be found nowhere else.

May our faith be something that is not merely stamped upon our coins, but expressed in our lives...To the extent that America honors You, will You bless America, and keep her true as You have kept her free, and make her good as You have made her rich. Amen.

—From *The Prayers of Peter Marshall in the U.S. Senate*

Response

- 1. The earth is the Lord's,
And all who dwell in it.**
- 2. God is king over the nations:
God sits on his holy throne.**
- 1. He rules by His might forever.
His eyes keep watch on the nations.**
- 2. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
For God judges the peoples with equity
and guides the nations upon earth.**

**All. O Lord, be gracious to us and bless us,
And make your face to shine upon us.
May Your ways be known upon the earth,
Your saving power among all peoples.**

**Lord of the nations, guide our people by your Spirit
to go forward in justice and freedom.**

**Give us faith in You, that our nation may bring glory to Your name
and blessings to all peoples.**

Deuteronomy 10: 12-13, 18-21

**And now, Israel, what does the Lord, your God, ask of you but to fear the Lord,
your God, and follow His ways exactly, to love and serve the Lord, your God, with
all your heart and all your soul, to keep the commandments and statutes of the
Lord for your own good?**

**The Lord executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and befriends the alien,
feeding and clothing him. So you too must befriend the alien, for you were once
aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.**

**The Lord, your God, shall you fear, and Him shall you serve; hold fast to Him and
swear by His name.**

**He is your glory, He, your God, Who has done for you those great and terrible
things which your own eyes have seen.**

The Word of the Lord!

Matthew 25: 31-46

**When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit
upon His glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before Him. And
He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from
the goats.**

He will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.

**Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My
Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

**For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a
stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for
me, in prison and you visited me.'**

**Then the righteous will answer Him and say, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry
and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?**

When did we see You a stranger and welcome You, or naked and clothe You?

When did we see You ill or in prison, and visit You?'

**And the King will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for
one of these least brothers of mine, you did for Me.'**

Then He will say to those on His left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, a stranger and you gave Me no welcome, naked and you gave Me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for Me.'

Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to Your needs?'

He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for Me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

The Gospel of the Lord!

Reflection: Archbishop Alex J. Burnett of Seattle

As I read and reflect on the Eucharistic Prayers and the other prayers for the Mass for Independence Day, the phrases that always give me pause are those that remind us that the United States is still a “work in progress.” Our nation has much to achieve if it is to be a place where all persons live as one. As the Eucharistic Prayer reminds us, Jesus’ message of peace “lives on in our midst as a task for men and women today and a promise for tomorrow.” In the opening prayer, we ask: “Father of all nations and ages ... For what has been achieved we give you thanks; for the work that still remains we ask your help.”

Needless to say, we have much to be thankful for on this Independence Day. Despite continuing hostilities in Iraq and Afghanistan, the ever-present possibility of terrorist attacks on our country, a poor economy and other national concerns, we are compelled to gratitude. We are free.

Likewise, we are aware that our lives continue to be enhanced on a daily basis by our nation’s remarkable achievements. For generations, Americans have worked hard to improve education, health care, social services, transportation, communications, agriculture, and so many other areas of life. Also, our nation is committed to ensuring liberty and justice for all persons. Countless Americans have given their lives to defend freedom at home and abroad; we are the beneficiaries of their sacrifice.

We know, however, that much remains to be done if we are to build lasting peace in the United States. We must also be aware that building peace is everyone’s responsibility. As the bread and wine are offered during the Mass for Independence Day, we pray: “God of mercy, as we present this bread and wine, make all of us a leaven for good, to make the good news of Christ present everywhere.”

On Independence Day 2009, I encourage you to celebrate with gratitude, and to reflect prayerfully on how you can be a leaven for good in your community. Again, as the Eucharistic Prayer tells us: Jesus’ message of peace “took form in the vision of our fathers as they fashioned a nation where men and women might live as one ... This message lives on in our midst as a task for men and women today, and a promise for tomorrow.”

PROCLAIM LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL



Prayers of Intercession

Response: Lord of all nations, hear us we pray.

For the people of the United States, that we may be united in building a society in which everyone can have the opportunity to live with dignity and hope, we pray to the Lord:

For the members of this community, that we may find ways to help build a world of greater respect for human life and human dignity, we pray to the Lord:

For those who serve in elected office, that they may lead with courage and wisdom, reflecting the Christ's teaching that the moral test of our society is how the weak, the poor, and the vulnerable are faring, we pray to the Lord:

For our President, Vice President, members of the Cabinet, of Congress and the Supreme Court, for governors and all elected officials of the states and cities, that the Holy Spirit will guide them in all their deliberations, we pray to the Lord:

For the earth, that our nation's leaders will be inspired by God's Spirit to protect all of His creation, we pray to the Lord:

For all citizens of the United States, that we may realize and appreciate the many gifts of our nation and through each of us, may lead to a world of greater respect for life and commitment to justice and peace, we pray to the Lord:

For those who are suffering from poverty and injustice, that our voices may lead to policies and programs that help them live in dignity, we pray to the Lord:

For all those who are or have served our country, that they may know of our gratitude and prayers, we pray to the Lord:

For all new immigrants to our country, that they may feel welcomed and be helped to acclimate themselves to our culture, we pray to the Lord:

For leaders around world, that they might find ways to bring an end to war and violence, and promote peace and development for all nations, we pray to the Lord:

Let us pray:

O Lord God, King of the nations, hear our prayers this day and answer them as only You know best. May we, Lord, always accept Your will in our regard. Amen.

Psalm 145

- 1. I will exalt you, O God my King,
and bless your Name for ever and ever.**
- 2. Every day will I bless you
and praise your Name for ever and ever.**
- 1. Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised;
there is no end to His greatness.**
- 2. One generation shall praise Your works to another
and shall declare Your power.**
- 1. I will ponder the glorious splendor of Your majesty
and all Your marvelous works.**
- 2. The Lord is loving to everyone
and His compassion is over all His works.**
- 1. All Your works praise you, O Lord,
and Your faithful servants bless You.**

**2. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom;
Your dominion endures throughout all ages.**

**All: The Lord is faithful in all His words
and merciful in all His deeds.**

Blessing

**May the glory of Independence Day
Remain in mind in heart
May we cherish our hard-won freedom
That it never falls apart.**

**Because those who walked before us
Believed in freedom's cause so much
We can carry forth a torch
Of honor and 'In God We Trust'.**

**That first Independence Day
Now more than two centuries past
Must live forever in our thoughts
Never forgotten - never a lapse.**

**It is a precious land we hold
In safekeeping for our children
That they, as we, may enjoy
Lives bountiful, worth living.**

**May God's blessings ever
Ring out over all our land
A toast of praise we raise today
Americans - join hand in hand!
- Susan Kramer**

Hymn: America, the Beautiful

**O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain.
America! America! God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.**

**O beautiful for pilgrim feet,
Whose stern impassion'd stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat
Across the wilderness.
America! America! God men thine ev'ry flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law.**

**O Beautiful for patriot dream
that sees beyond the years.
Thine alabaster cities gleam,
Undimmed by human tears.
America! America! God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood,
From sea to shining sea.**





**Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception,
Patroness of the United States,
watch over our country that we will be one nation under God.**

**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's
and to God, the things that are God's.**

**Live Jesus in our hearts.
Forever!**



**Father,
You prepared the Virgin Mary
to be the worthy mother of Your Son.
You let her share beforehand
in the salvation
Christ would bring by His death,
and kept her sinless
from the first moment of her conception.
Help us by her prayers
to live in Your presence without sin.
Watch over our country dedicated to her
under the title of the Immaculate Conception.
May we as citizens of the USA work for freedom, peace, justice
and the dignity of all peoples
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
Who lives and reigns
with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen**

