Today we celebrate the freedom of our great country. We reflect on the most powerful words in the history of America. “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.”

How fortunate we are to experience and share the diversity, culture, and traditions of all our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are blessed to dwell and have the luxury of living in a nation that embraces and protects each person regardless of their ethnicity or religious belief. We value and safeguard the young and the old, those mentally and physically challenged, and those burdened and oppressed.

In Luke’s Gospel today, we are reminded of our roles as servants here on earth. We are the vehicles designed to reflect God’s glory and bring the message of Jesus Christ and God’s love for people to all nations. We recognize the yearning of every human heart for love, hope, peace and belonging.

Jesus looks out into the same world we see. Do we see it like He does? “The harvest is abundant and the laborers are few.” Jesus sent his disciples on a mission to spread peace. His intentions were not a simple greeting of Shalom, but rather the capacity to spread this message of peace not only in our individual lives, but also in our community, in the nation and throughout the world.

We enter the first days of summer with great anticipation and enthusiasm. Our parish community is vibrant and alive. We continue to build our relationships with God and with one another. Our ministries continue to thrive and participation on every level is increasing steadily. We value the inherent good in each other and work together to build our church, spiritually and physically, rich in the ideals and principles communicated to us by Jesus.

Our parish activity calendar is full and offers all of us opportunities to share our time, talent and treasure. We are already planning our Parish Picnic and Barbecue, Ministry Sunday and various dinner dances and fundraisers designed to bring our community together in friendship and fellowship. Never underestimate the power you have to reach out to others by inviting them to share and participate in the special events and ministries we have here at St. Joseph. You do not know the impact you may have on another by simply extending the kindness of an invitation.

Please keep in mind our continued efforts to increase our plate collection as we encourage all our members to seriously examine the role and responsibility each of us play in the stability and strength of our parish. We continue to develop and grow in our understanding of how important our gifts are not only today, but tomorrow and for the future.

I close with a quote from Father Dominic Grassi. “There are times that we as a country feel we have been set apart as a special nation blessed in a special way by God. We have to be careful about this kind of attitude because it can lead to an arrogance and a feeling that we can do no wrong. The question really should be what do we do with our abundant blessings. Isaiah tells Jerusalem to rejoice over her blessings. But later, the responsibility of prosperity means remaining faithful to God.”

May we be grateful for our many blessings and assume the responsibility they bestow upon us by remaining faithful to God.

Peace and love,

Father Manny

Monsignor Manuel Simas
Reservation of the Eucharist

For the last 30 years, Catholics have grown accustomed to hearing much more of the Word of God proclaimed than they had for centuries. Until the reforms of the recent past, Roman Catholic liturgy had focused on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, while Protestant liturgies placed more emphasis on the Word of God and its interpretation. The most obvious architectural symbol of the contrast between these two poles was the central and unmistakable presence of a tabernacle in most Roman Catholic worship spaces. For many, its very presence within the sanctuary was a statement of the particular and defining belief of the Catholic Church.

The Second Vatican Council emphasized the belief of the Church that Christ is present in a number of ways when we gather for worship. While the central teaching of the presence of Christ in the Eucharistic species remains unchanged, we are also taught to recognize Christ in the proclamation of the Word, in the person of the presiding priest, and, in the very assembly of believers.

Another recovery that has enriched our liturgical life is the understanding of the Eucharist as an act. The word Eucharist comes from the Greek, meaning “a giving thanks.” It is in the very act of taking, blessing, breaking and sharing that is the heart of Jesus’ command to “Do this in memory of me.” This fuller understanding of the liturgy urges us to unite ourselves with the Christ in a perfect offering to God. The restoration of more frequent reception of communion that has occurred in the last century is yet another return to a much earlier tradition, when all who were present would partake of the meal.