

The wise need no further instruction about the virtue of thankfulness. They recognize that to have a heart so hard and a head so dense that it will not appreciate what is good and beneficial, is ungraced by true dignity.

Among the many things that are worthy of awestruck gratitude is freedom - freedom to choose our preferences of endeavor, preference of political views, social associations, freedom to travel from one end of the country to the other unmolested by government coercion threatening the privilege of free choice. Such autonomy is a part of what this past Independence Day celebrates.

Some fail to recognize the substance of the meaning of the term "values". For no people failing to retain values of high moral character will long retain such lofty rewards as meaningful levels of freedom. John Adams warned that when the character of Americans is no longer great, we would not long thereafter be able to continue enjoying the blessings of liberty.

Let us be attentive such that high character is modeled within ourselves and lovingly shaped within our children. Our children will only be cute for a short while, after that, it is about character. For Christians, the meaning of true character is ultimately the work of the Spirit in our hearts and minds, not some carnal pride.

Parents have a critical role in guiding children to this enlightenment and fundamental development. (Ps 132:12; Pro. 22:6). By our bringing up children of substantive Christian character, we pass on blessings to the country and to all those who will interact with them. It is one of the most loving and useful things we can do for humanity and for our children. It is also one of the most patriotic things we can do for our country and for insuring continuing liberty. They will be those who ask 'what can we do for our country's betterment' rather than 'how can our country indulge our desires' [paraphrasing John F. Kennedy].

Let us be sure to thank God for the blessings of liberty that we enjoy.