

INDEPENDENCE DAY: JULY 4, 2020

Last night, I had dinner with two priest friends. After dinner, we watched the Rally at Mt. Rushmore in South Dakota. One of the reasons I wanted to watch the rally is that my parents came from the Black Hills of South Dakota. My mom was born and raised on a cattle ranch, just 16 miles away from that magnificent monument, and I still have relatives living there whom I often visit.

During the rally, President Donald Trump briefly recounted the incredible history of our nation, describing our nation's cherished values and culture, using the four great Presidents carved into that granite mountain as his outline. Those values can be summed up in three simple, but powerful phrases—phrases you can find on every U.S. coin. And they are: 1) E Pluribus Unum; 2) Liberty; and 3) In God We Trust

As our President reminded us last night, they are the values that we need to remember, that we need to teach to our children, and that we need to fight for in these days when people have forgotten or distorted much of our history and our values. That's why I would like to take a few moments to explain each value to you.

First, "E Pluribus Unum." This is a Latin phrase means "From Many One." This means that America doesn't care where people come from. We don't care about a person's blood origins, their ethnic origins, their racial origins, or their religious origins. If they come here to America to work with us to make America

great, they are one of us, whatever their color, creed, race or country of origin.

This value “E Pluribus Unum” draws us together as one people, one nation. From different languages, cultures, and creeds, many people come to America to be united under one Constitution, one flag, one national language of English to be one nation. Anyone is welcome to become one with us to fulfill a desire for something better and a chance to live life on his or her own terms. This value explains the immigrants' longings. It also connects us to the universal desire for liberty, which is the second unique great value of America.

Liberty means that we are a nation founded on a desire to be free from tyranny and from rulers dictating our position in life and our chances for success. The longing to be free is innate in all people because it is God’s desire for all his children, as reflected throughout the Old and New Testaments, and in our first reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Now some will say, “*Hey, Americans are not the only ones to enshrine Liberty.*” The French Revolution said, “*Liberté, Egalité, and Fraternité*”—*Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*. That’s true! But America is the only country to enshrine Liberty, together with “*E Pluribus Unum*” and “*In God we Trust.*” That’s uniquely American.

Our sense of Liberty is not the same as how the French understand it. The French understood and still understand liberty as equality. They believe in equality of birth and equality of results at the end of life.

Notice that equality is not part of the American vision. That's a European value. In America, we believe in equality of birth, but not in equality of results. Where you end up in life, that's your business! Our business in America is to enable everyone to have the same liberty to end up wherever their talents, determination, their focus, their discipline, and, yes, some luck, bring them.

As Americans, we don't believe in liberty as equality because liberty and equality are often in conflict. For example, if you want to enforce equality, then you start telling people how much money they can earn. When you want to enforce equality, then you begin to destroy free will, initiative, self-determination, and hard work. You start forming people to think that they are owed or entitled certain things without hard work. You begin to make people dependent on a government and create a nanny state.

This is not what God envisioned for us, His children. God created us in His image and likeness. God fashioned us to be creative, to take initiative, to work hard for God, for ourselves and for others.

That brings us to the third value, *"In God We Trust."* America is founded on the truth that God is the source of all life and values. That's why the Declaration of Independence says we have "*certain inalienable rights—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.*" Those values are not given to us from philosophies like humanism or from great thinkers. Philosophers and philosophies may have articulated some of those values, but the fact is these values are from God. God is and must be

central. And I will tell you why. If there is no God, then rights can be taken away by the very people who believe they or government are the ones who give those rights.

At our core, we are a nation that sees itself *under* God, not *under* a government. The government is of us, by us, and for us, but it is not over us. We trust in the Creator as the giver of our rights and liberties, not the government. The government's job is simply to defend those rights and our three sacred values.

Those three values are at the heart of our nation and her vision. It has worked wonderfully for 244 years—not perfectly because the nation is only a larger picture of each one of us who have our own flaws—but it has worked wonderfully and has accomplished many great things for us and for the world.

But now it is under attack because the average American, who deeply loves this country, cannot articulate those unique values of this country or, worse, are now afraid to articulate them.

The problem arises from the fact that these great American values have not been taught for quite a while. The problem goes back over 110 years ago to John Dewey and to the importation of European professors and the European ideologies to our universities, and to host of other issues. The fact is these uniquely American values that have made this country great have not been passed on.

When the average American doesn't know what are our unique American values, then other people can start substituting new values for them. And that's what has been happening, especially in the last four decades. Many of the intellectual elite in America, who subscribe to the European system and values—and now even Marxist ones—are substituting those European and Marxist values for our American values.

Instead of "*E Pluribus Unum*", the intellectual elite are substituting and promoting "*E Pluribus Pluriba*" or "*From Many Many*," known as multiculturalism. For them, what is important is that everyone keeps his own language, his own customs, his traditions, and not assimilate into this country as one nation. If you want to see the end results of this multiculturalism, just look at what is happening in Europe and the Middle East at this very moment. Individual groups have never assimilated, and now they are rioting and fighting for their own little piece of land.

In place of Liberty, the cultural elite teach equality—equality of birth and equality of results. As I said earlier, when that happens, you begin to destroy free will, initiative, hard work, and self-determination, and hard work. You start forming people to think that they are entitled to certain things without hard work. You begin to make people dependent on a government. And in place of "*In God We Trust*" and that God is the essence and basis of our values, the elite are substituting "*In Government We Trust*." Since God is not part of the equation, in the intellectual elite's mind and teachings, it is government which gives the rights and government who can take away the

rights. It is government who determines who has the rights and who will not.

Just look at what has been happening during this pandemic where, in my mind, I believe our state governments have done a huge overreach of their powers, taking away some of our most cherished freedoms—guaranteed by the Constitution—all supposedly in the name of science that has been all over the board and wrong in many cases.

Brothers and sisters, we are at an important crossroads. A society does not survive if it does not have a reason to survive. Where there is a why, there is always a how! But we are losing our why. So, if we lose to multiculturalism and become “*From Many, Many,*” we will lose our distinctive character and strength that comes from unity. If we lose “*Liberty*” for “*Equality,*” then we will become like most of Europe or worse like many Marxist-dominated countries and end up a nanny state and everyone poor except a few at the top. If we lose the belief that we are a nation under and trusting God, and drive religion from the public square, then we will lose our true character, our greatness and our way.

So, on this Fourth of July, as our President, Donald Trump, challenged all Americans last night at the Rally at Mt. Rushmore, I would encourage—no I challenge you—not just to celebrate Independence Day today, but to begin fighting vigorously for our nation’s true independence and her great values.