

BULLETIN – JULY 3

Just a question. These days, nearly every government official who speaks about incidents of terrorism committed by an Islamic extremist has to blather the required disclaimer: “He does not in any way represent the religion of Islam.” Can you imagine government officials coming forward in the last 20 years every time a Catholic priest was accused of sexual abuse of a minor, quickly reminding everyone, “He does not in any way represent the Catholic Church”? If that had happened, our proper response as Catholics should have been, “Well, he was *supposed* to!!!” But if a defensive and protective government posture had been the case, we could easily have been lulled into a complacency about the whole sordid mess, the Church would not have been nearly as vigilant as we have become, and nothing would have changed. The current Administration displays toward Islam an obvious favoritism which it clearly does not think of extending toward any other faith or its adherents. Christianity, in fact, has been singled out in presidential speeches for particular blame and criticism. Are we perceiving a kind of subtle (and anti-constitutional) “establishment” of a particular religion here? And how is that hurting, not other faiths, but *Islam itself*, and all those Muslims who are indeed sincerely pushing for internal reforms to “mainstream” those who truly wish to live peaceably with their non-Muslim neighbors?

Lighten up on lightin’ up? Sounds like a good idea. A recently concluded 25-year study for the *Journal of the American Medical Association Internal Medicine*, people who smoked marijuana regularly into middle age had worse verbal fluency than those who cut the habit when they were younger. Also, the more years people smoked marijuana, the less adept they were at recalling words from a list of 15.

R-r-r-really, man? Gee, like, wow . . . A previous President excused his youthful marijuana use by saying he had never inhaled. We’re afraid that the problem with many current users is that they never *ex*-hale!

Our Franciscan Sisters inform us that several Sisters who have connections here at SS. Peter & Paul are celebrating milestone anniversaries. **Sister Miriam Racas, O.S.F.**, a Detroit native, is celebrating her 75th anniversary. She both taught and served a term as principal at our school. She lives at the Nativity rectory in South Park, PA. Residing with her there is **Sister Mary Francine McDonald, O.S.F.**, who attended our parish school and Catholic Central High School. She is celebrating her 65th anniversary, along with her classmate, **Sister Mary Edward Urban, O.S.F.**, who had her first teaching assignment here at SS. Peter & Paul in the early 1950’s. Sister Mary Edward is presently on the staff at the motherhouse in Pittsburgh. God bless them all for their wonderful service!

Thoughts for the Fourth. In 1887 Alexander Tyler, a Scottish history professor at the University of Edinburgh, had this to say about the fall of the Athenian Republic some 2,000 years prior: "A democracy is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government. A democracy will continue to exist up until the time that voters discover that they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates who

promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the result that every democracy will finally collapse over loose fiscal policy, (which is) always followed by a dictatorship."

Thoughts on independence. Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-59), known for his commentary on Americans and their democracy, noted, "Religion does not give them their taste for freedom. It singularly facilitates their use of it." What the French visitor and observer saw was that democracy could not be properly exercised without the ethical and moral foundation which individual citizens gained from their religious beliefs.

It seems sadly significant that the monument in Washington, D.C., honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which was dedicated in October, 2011, contains absolutely no mention of God. It was, of course, designed by an atheist Chinese communist artist--a most unusual choice to memorialize a Christian pastor, one would think. We could leave that aside; for after all, in a life-threatening emergency, even an atheist doctor could, for instance, baptize the infant he or she was delivering by using the Trinitarian formula and simply doing what the Church intends. The argument is not with the Chinese sculptor, but with the agents of political correctness who have studiously edited out of King's memorial the historical fact that he would not have accomplished what he did had he not been a believer, a Christian, a pastor, and a preacher *par excellence*. King's own words are full of references to God, peppered with quotes from Sacred Scripture. He was a man of action, but there was no doubt in the minds of any of his associates that he was also a man of deep and intense prayer. He was not perfect, and critics are quick to point out his flaws. But no one can justifiably accuse him of not being a servant of God's Word, in speech or in action. One would never guess the connection, if the first introduction to King were a visit to his memorial. And that is the tragedy--that neither the artist nor the secularists who ultimately approved the finished product demonstrate any awareness of the underlying motive for King's life, for his work, or for his death.

Without that awareness, the cause of civil rights appears to be simply a crusade for giving "me" as an individual whatever I want, whenever I want it. What really inspired so many to give their energies and even their lives in the historical cause of civil rights was that so many millions were prevented from making the contributions to society of which they were so capable. Much like Nazi Germany blinded itself to the intellectual, artistic, and spiritual contributions of its Jewish citizens, America had long willfully chosen to disregard the possibility of receiving benefit from the talents and care of untold numbers of men and women simply because of their race. Religious belief inspired many to long for and seek freedom so they could *contribute*, and not just receive. Without faith in God as an inspiration, "civil rights" quickly becomes just a quest for a giant welfare state--which is sadly what many seem to think is the purpose of rights and freedom. "Be all that you can be" becomes "Take whatever you can get"; and that indeed would make Dr. King, as well as all those who joined him in the great crusade, weep. God bless you!

Fr. Den

As the Fourth approaches: "I belong to a country where the civil government holds over us the aegis of its protection, without interfering with us in the legitimate

exercise of our sublime mission as ministers of the Gospel of Christ. Our country has liberty without license and authority without despotism” (James Cardinal Gibbons, 1834-1921, and Archbishop of Baltimore 1877-1921). May it continue to be true!