

One Nation Under God

Rooted in the Gospel and illuminated by our tradition of trust in the Holy Spirit, Our Catholic faith seeks to make the world more like the Reign of God as Jesus describes it. ("Thy kingdom come...") And it's hard to imagine a better place to work on this project than here in this nation, under God.

Over the Memorial Day weekend, we had the opportunity to listen to the stirring words of "America, the Beautiful" as a prelude to each of the weekend Masses, and then to sing it together on the morning of the holiday itself. It's a beautiful prayer that our nation might remember, strive for, and achieve its very highest ideals.

This text has some truly marvelous poetry and imagery for America at its very best. Is there one phrase that especially resonates with you? How can you, as a Catholic, advance the particular quality that has caught your attention? (You have until the Fourth of July to decide!) Would this make an interesting discussion among your family members?

Amber waves of grain: In a nation of abundance, why are people hungry? What can we do to help address this challenge?

Purple mountain majesties: God's creation is entrusted to our care so that future generations can thrive as we have. What would make us better stewards of this precious gift?

Crown thy good with brotherhood: How can we connect better as members of God's family?

A thoroughfare for freedom: Does everyone in this beautiful country enjoy the freedoms that you do? What can we do to ensure that they do?

God mend thine every flaw: Recognizing that we have not fully achieved every ideal is not something to feel guilty about, but an opportunity to do better, with God's help. What can we do better?

Confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law: How does the message of the Gospel help us to discipline our life so that liberty is extended more fully? ("discipline" = "disciple")

Alabaster cities, undimmed by human tears: How can we as Catholics help to wipe away the tears of those among us who suffer in poverty, illness, hunger, injustice?

For heroes proved in liberating strife: Our faith is built on the foundation that the martyrs laid down along with their lives. Our nation's privileges have a similar foundation. What does our faith say to us about this?

Who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life: Mercy is the hallmark of Jesus. How can we help our nation to show mercy as a sign of true strength?

May God thy gold refine: Wealth and power bring responsibility. What is our role in God's work of refining our power so that justice, love, and mercy are its goals?

Til all success be nobleness and every gain divine: Jesus shows what true success looks like. It looks like surrender to the will of God and sacrifice for the good of others, and it leads to the glory of eternal life. How shall we join ourselves with Him in this pursuit of true happiness?

Don't try to tackle all of these; pick one that speaks to you. May God bless America and her people, and may God strengthen our Catholic faith as we go about our daily American life.