

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Homily Transcript

July 5, 2026

So, this morning we are celebrating the 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time in the Catholic Church internationally. Throughout the world, it's the 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time, whether you're in Spain or Mexico or Italy, throughout the world, it's the 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time. But for us in the United States, this is also our Independence Day weekend. And so, there's a whole lot of celebration, and I went down to Winfield with my family last night and on the drive back, just the fireworks going off everywhere and like the thick smoke, almost the whole drive back. It's just like there's something special about the Fourth of July, but especially celebrating 250 years.

But for us as Catholics, there is an important distinction to be made, that we are not American Catholics. We are Catholic Americans. Maybe that seems like semantics, but it absolutely is a crucial distinction that our citizenship is first and foremost in heaven. And then after that, we belong to whatever country that we happen to live in, but Catholics are universal. It doesn't matter where you're from, what country you're from, that the Catholic faith, that is where our citizenship lies. And then from there, we are part of the United States of America. And as such, as Christians and as Catholics, we make the best citizens.

You know, as we celebrate 250 years, I think it's worth kind of reflecting on the nature of that break with England, the break of our, you know, the founders of this country, the driving force behind why they found it necessary to split off and form their own nation. So if you've not had a chance to read the Declaration of Independence since, say, second grade, I would recommend going back and rereading that document. It is an incredibly, incredibly important document, obviously, for our nation. But it also has kind of a snapshot. And there are things written within the Declaration of Independence that are presuppositions that they make that have kind of changed or shifted since then.

But as you kind of, as you read through it, you understand the Founding Fathers, what they valued, what belief system they were working out of. So in that document, here's the line that I'm sure you all are familiar with, or hopefully you're at least somewhat familiar with, one of the big sentences from the Declaration itself. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal. Now a self-evident truth is something that does not need explanation. It does not need a defense. You don't have to make an argument for it. It is by its own nature true. And what's interesting is that since the Declaration of Independence was written and designed, there has been a shift in morality.

And I wish I could go into all the background of the philosophical underpinnings that have changed in the last 200 years, how what we have accepted as a society, and beyond just the society of the United States, how the Western kind of understanding of morality, how or why it has shifted by a philosophical

change. Going back to philosophers like Immanuel Kant, who has this kind of theory of relativism where, especially moral relativism, where what you believe is true for you, what I believe is true for me, and I can't tell you what to do and you can't tell me what to do. And that ultimate source of our morality is what I choose to believe or not. But you hear the opposite of that in the Declaration.

The philosophical underpinning of the founding fathers. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal. What they are saying is there is an objective truth that is out there, whether you believe it or whether I believe it, doesn't matter. It is self-evident and it is outside of our collective agreement that all men are created equal. That truth is very much a Christian principle. Now it's true, most of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, only a couple of them were Catholic, most of them were Protestants. But it is a Christian principle and it is not a universal truth that all men are created equal.

That is something that we derive from our understanding of who God is and what He bestowed upon us in our creation. As a matter of fact, that goes on to the next line. That all men are created equal and that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights. The source of our rights are not the government. Now that is something that we saw in the last hundred years, the shift that has come along with Marxism and communism, Nazism, all the various isms of the 19th century or the 20th century. All of those things that have developed have sprung from a moral theology or moral philosophy that says truth is subjective and whoever has the biggest stick makes the truth.

Your right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness comes from the government telling you you have this right or you don't have this right. That is very much the Marxist understanding, but not the understanding of our forefathers in our nation. That our rights come from the creator himself. Now among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Now we could get into defining some of these terms, life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness, but before I get there, I'm curious if you could answer this question, what, according to the Declaration of Independence, what is the purpose of the government? Why does the government exist according to the founders of the United States of America?

Why does government exist? To collect taxes, obviously. No, no. Among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men. The point or the purpose of a government is to secure and to protect these unalienable rights that are bestowed by God. That is why we have government. That is, again, the foundational principle of why our nation was established and that the King of England was not respecting those rights. Here's the thing, brothers and sisters, where the shift has changed since 1776 and since we have now accepted morality that is relative and there's no longer any kind of acceptance of objective truth that is out there.

Now it's subjective of what I believe and what you believe. You look at like Sigmund Freud, who was the founder of modern psychology and all this stuff, but what was his principle of operation? When he was going through, obviously he was an atheist, very much anti-Christian, super anti-Catholic, but this idea of

people who were struggling with shame or guilt surrounding morality of, particularly of human sexuality, they would go and they would do various acts and then they'd feel bad about it. We call that conscience, he called that a suppression.

And so in order to free the human psyche, what you have to do is get rid of that code of morality that is based on a God that doesn't exist anyways and just basically say the reason why you're having hold ups is because you believe what you did was wrong, but everything is fine. If it feels good, you can do it. That morality has very much been adopted. It's an underlying philosophy has been adopted by and large by our society. And we can see the ramifications of that in any old newspaper that you pick up. But brothers and sisters, this is where you and I come into play, of being leaven in the bread that makes the whole loaf rise, that we believe in freedom.

And freedom is not defined in so far as doing whatever you feel like or whatever feels good in the moment. Freedom is the ability to pursue what is right. And it is first and foremost, interiorly oriented, where I don't necessarily need the government to tell me what is right or wrong. But I have a moral objective and I answer to God who has endowed me with these unalienable rights. So as we move along and as we ask this question of like, am I pursuing true freedom? This talks about this freedom, the freedom to pursue excellence. Now I am free to pursue excellence in piano, to play Chopin, right? But I don't have the technical skills to play Chopin.

Now I have the freedom to pursue excellence in basketball and to play in the NBA. But if I jump out on the court and I tuck the basketball under my arm like a football and run across the court, I'm going to get called for traveling. But if I say, no, I don't subscribe to those rules, I am free from those rules, I am pursuing excellence under my own definition. The only reason we can pursue excellence is because there are laws and there is morality guiding us, extrinsic from us. And again, the founding fathers presuppose that, but the morality that we see in 2026 has rejected that. So brothers and sisters, that is our job.

That is our responsibility and it's been the call for Christians and Catholics since the very beginning where St. Paul says, we live in the world, but we are not of the world. We are citizens of every nation, but we belong to no nation. Justin Martyr, one of the very first Christian writings that we have that is still in existence today. He talks about how people in the Roman Empire would look at Christians and they weren't going to all these various parties with all kinds of immorality and they weren't like participating in the gladiator fights and the feeding people to the lions. And people would look at these Christians like, what's up with these guys?

They're our next door neighbors, they're Roman citizens, they're living beside us, but they act differently. If salt loses its taste or its flavor with what can it be seasoned? This idea of salt and light, this idea of pursuing excellence, pursuing freedom interiorly, to not be ruled or governed by addiction, to not be ruled or governed by simple emotion or like a little kid who hasn't learned self-discipline and they throw a temper tantrum in the store because they don't get their way. Again, if that's freedom, doing

whatever you want, you can do that. But if we are pursuing excellence, we pursue an interior discipline where we make choices in interior freedom.

Now as much as any point in the history of our 250 years as a nation, now as much as ever, we need those kind of citizens. Citizens of virtue, citizens who can be salt and light. And the thing is, salt, you put it in a wound and it stings like heck, but it also cauterizes. And so I really do believe that is our job today, to stand up and be a voice for the voiceless and say, no, abortion is not right. No, it is not acceptable, it is morally unacceptable to have physician assisted suicide. And all the various things, that there is a difference between men and women. And we have an objective standard to fall back on of why that is true.

In this great nation, truly, in my belief, this is the greatest nation that has ever existed on the planet. But it is so, I think, primarily because of the nature of the people. And I think it is our job as citizens, as Catholic citizens, to be able to be that salt and the light. May God bless the USA.