



“IT JUST IS NOT ENOUGH TO TALK ABOUT BEING CARING CHRISTIANS...”

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Dear Friends,
Independence Day. The 4th of July is a time for us to celebrate the work of those brave heroes who gathered in Philadelphia during the hot summer of 1776. We remember their resolve to throw off the restraints of a far away ruling power in favor of the rule of the local and democratically elected representatives. Again this summer we remember the birth of a nation we are proud to call home.

I am particularly mindful of the quote that came from Benjamin Franklin who said, on the occasion of the signing of the Declaration of Independence: “Gentlemen, we must all hang together or most assuredly we will hang separately.” From the very beginning, the leaders of the American Revolution understood that they were dependent upon one another to accomplish their goals. Either they worked together by coordinated their efforts or they knew the English rulers would be able to defeat them. “Standing together” made all the difference in 1776 and still makes all the differ-

ence in contemporary life.

Recently, in my personal devotions, I have been reading in the Epistle of First John and in a book by Thomas Merton, a renowned Trappist monk. In each of these I have come to a renewed sense of God’s presence in the community of believers.

In the 3rd and 4th chapters of First John I am reminded of God’s Love as the primary doctrine, or teaching, of the Church. It is God’s essence to love the creation, and the people in it. In Chapter 3:16 we read: “We know love by this, that (Jesus) laid down his life for us-and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.” And verse 18: “Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.” It just is not enough to talk about being caring Christians, it is necessary that we love our fellow believers. We are to care for one another, trust one another, and support one another. Even when we are not especially friends with a fellow believer, we are called to stand together because the power of evil in this world stands as a great destroyer to catch us in our weakest moments of anger, greed and jealousy to attack the community of faith, and us personally.

