

**Irrational Prejudice**    Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time    Wednesday, July 4, 2018  
8:15 AM    Am 5:14-15, 21-24;    **Mt 8:28-34**    **Independence Day**    (Catholics were the  
object of irrational prejudice and bigotry.)

**The lesson of today's gospel is very simple: some people don't want salvation or liberation or freedom.**

**Well today we celebrate the birth of our country with the signing of the Declaration of Independence.** Now a few years ago I attended a lecture by the late Cardinal George of Chicago. Cardinal George was an historian. He talked about this day and the whole process of declaring independence and **the arguments that were set forward, why it was a good idea to rebel against the king of England.** Now you may think that this is all obvious, but it wasn't at all. Most of the colonists were loyal citizens, subjects, of the King of England; and **most of them thought of themselves as Englishmen.** They were and remained attached to **the whole idea of English law, so-called Common Law,** which is different from all other law systems. We still use Common Law in every state in the United States except Louisiana, which was not established by Englishmen.

Now in the arguments about the king and whether he should be the legitimate ruler, one of the prominent arguments for secession, for rebellion, was that **the king of England had violated his solemn oath that he made upon his coronation to oppose every form of Roman Catholicism and what they called "popery," by allowing the celebration of the Holy Mass in the province of Québec,** which he did following the French and Indian War and the great upheavals there were found among the French-Canadians. So in order to allow for some sort of tranquility to re-enter into Canada the king allowed the public celebration of the Holy Mass. This in the minds of many of the colonists in what became our country was unacceptable and unforgivable, so **bitter was the anti-Catholic prejudice** that they entertained. In fact Catholics were only openly able to worship in Philadelphia, the reason being that **Philadelphia** was controlled for the most part by Quakers, and **the Quakers were the only tolerant group among the early colonists.** And that's something as Catholics we should keep in mind, that at one time **we were the object of irrational prejudice and bigotry.** So it would seem that it would be very reasonable for us to sympathize with those today who are the victims of irrational bigotry. That would be a good way perhaps to celebrate the birth of this country dedicated to freedom.