

HAPPY BIRTHDAY U.S.A.

1776-1976



We pause at this time in thanksgiving, praise and celebration for the birth of our nation and its 200 years of glorious history. Our patriotism, the virtue of patriotism, keeps us singing proudly the physical beauty of our land, its "spacious skies, amber waves of grain, purple mountain majestics and fruited plain;" keeps us singing of the "good" crowned with "brotherhood," that protects and promotes our happiness, even as a good family should. The same patriotism prompts us to pray and work to "mend thine every flaw," physical and social flaws like ghettos and slums, pollution, waste, discrimination, avarice, corruption, selfishness and apathy, apathy as in voting. Patriotism would have us further, to pray and work to "increase thy love" toward all people. The Scripture readings for the Bicentennial Mass tell us a new world is possible, indeed is coming — through the Spirit of God, and His Justice and love in us.

Indeed, perhaps today, 200 years later, it is time for another Declaration, a DECLARATION of INTERDEPENDENCE. We have men and women of the same calibre, to respond again, in the words of John Adams, to "the felt necessities of the times."

A DECLARATION of INTERDEPENDENCE today would be a giant step forward for a nation that already declares its absolute dependence on God, and independence in sovereignty — a step to interdependence of nation with nation, on a planet wherein we all must live as one family; a giant step worthy of a nation that could step on the moon for a look at this tiny blue globe.

Such a Declaration could parallel the structure and wording of the Declaration of Independence. It could start:

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to recognize and strengthen the familial bonds which have connected them with others, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate, equal, and familial station to which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God entitled them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to this confirmation.

Like the Declaration of Independence, the DECLARATION of INTERDEPENDENCE could then list these causes:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men, all men, are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, (including the Right to Food), Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

That governments, recognizing the global community as a family bound together by ties of mutual responsibility, must cooperate with other states to insure these rights for all mankind.

That when a number of polities evince, ignore, or contribute to a growing deprivation of human rights in the global community, it is their right, their duty to alter such policies, to provide for their own and world security.

Such has been the sufferance of these United States, and thus now the necessity which constrains them to alter some policies. The rights of all mankind, indeed, the survival of mankind, is at stake.

To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

As facts were submitted 200 years ago against the British government, we might impute some of our own flaws, like:

Accelerating the arms race, basing our credibility on power rather than genuine long-range commitment to peace.

We, 6 per cent of the world's population, consuming 35 per cent of the world's resources, have no effective initiative to bring about a just sharing in global prosperity. It is out of date and dangerous for a minority of humankind to live in abundance surrounded by misery.

And we have not always maintained consistency between our national ideals in human rights and our international behavior. To affirm or deny human rights in one place is to do so everywhere.

Like our forefathers, we could then appeal to

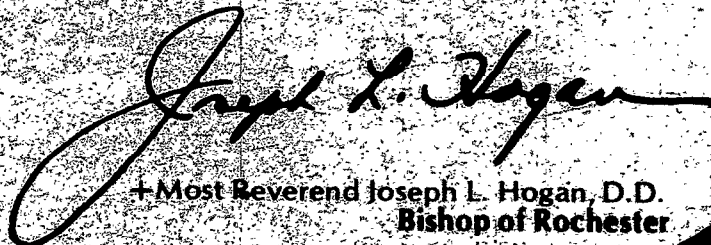
The Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, and declare that these independent United States are also INTERDEPENDENT, recognizing and strengthening the ties that bind her to the family of nations in mutual dependence: human, cultural, social, political ties.

Politically, we affirm the goal of an international political community governed by the values of justice, truth, charity, and freedom.

Strategically, we acknowledge a right of defense with the use of force only for defense, within defined limits, always as a last resort.

Economically, we must assert that the existing distribution of wealth in the world is an imperative to take specific steps to allocate the global product in a more equitable fashion, among the whole human family; be willing to side with the powerless, to share our abundance with other nations, to experience some of their suffering — in true family spirit.

And finally, for the support of this DECLARATION, too, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we should mutually pledge to each other, and to the world, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

  
+ Most Reverend Joseph L. Hogan, D.D.  
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