

Happy Fourth of July! This is a good moment to give thanks to God for our country and to pray for her. I would also like to make recommendation: If you enjoy listening to lectures on American history, Professor Daniel N. Robinson has a fine set of lectures titled *American Ideals: Founding a "Republic of Virtue"* (Great Courses series). He illustrates how the founders of our country were convinced that a democratic form of government couldn't last unless the citizens practiced virtue. They maintained that every form of government encourages a specific passion in its citizens. A dictatorship tries to inspire fear, a monarchy wants honor, but a democracy requires virtue.



This striving for virtue can be illustrated by one of the stories told about our first president, George Washington. When he was boy, his father was walking in their orchard and noticed that someone had cut down the cherry tree. He asked young George if he knew who did it. Washington replied, "I cannot tell a lie. I did it." It might be a bit of a legend, but it underscores what everyone knew about Washington. He was a man of character, a man of virtue. The founding fathers were convinced that America would not endure unless it became a "republic of virtue." Let's pray for that – for ourselves and our family members - we celebrate the Fourth of July. It would be a great mistake to think that our country will automatically continue to exist. It depends on what our founding fathers called a "passion for virtue."

Last week I offered a World Youth Day quiz that illustrates some aspects of virtue. I thank those who took the time to answer the quiz. I have prizes for the first three people who returned the correct answers. They are Todd Howard, Clayton Avalos and Christian Carbajal. Here are the answers:

1. *What was St. Francis of Assisi's baptismal name?*

Giovanni. Francis was a nickname meaning "Frenchy" (Francesco) on account of his youthful predilection for story of chivalry and love songs from Provence in Southern France.

2. *Who founded the feminine counterpart to the Franciscan Order?*

St. Clare of Assisi. Her contemplative order is known as the "Poor Clares."

3. *Whose tomb is directly below the main altar of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome?*

The Apostle Peter's. Twentieth century excavations have confirmed ancient traditions regarding the burial spot of the "Prince of the Apostles."

4. *According to the Acts of Peter, St. Peter asked Jesus "Quo Vadis, Domine?": What does that phrase mean in English?*

"Where are you going, Lord?" When Jesus responded, "I am going to Rome to be crucified again," Peter realized he should return to Rome to face his martyrdom. He was crucified, head downward, at Nero's Circus on Vatican Hill of Rome. A Church stands on the Appian Way at the site of Peter's vision of Jesus.

5. *Why was St. Paul beheaded (instead of being put to death by crucifixion)?*

He was a Roman citizen. Crucifixion was considered too shameful for a Roman. Paul was executed by the sword – beheading.

6. *St. Theresa of Avila died on October 4, 1582, and was buried on October 15 of that year: How many days lapsed between her death and burial?*

One day. It happened that Teresa died exactly when the Gregorian calendar came into use. Spain was one of the first countries to adopt the modern calendar commissioned by Pope Gregory VIII. Implementing the new calendar involved skipping ten days so that October 15 followed October 4. (St. Teresa's Feast Day is October 15 – October 4 was already taken by St. Francis of Assisi.)

7. *Maimed in the Battle of Lepanto (1571) and held captive for five years by Islamic pirates, Miguel de Cervantes went on to write "the first modern novel": What is the title of that work?*

Don Quixote de la Mancha. The work inspired innumerable novelists including American writers like Mark Twain and William Faulkner. Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn are versions of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. Faulkner said that he read Don Quixote every year "as some do the Bible." Not a bad way to spend a few summer evenings.

8. *Cervantes and Shakespeare died on the same date (April 23, 1616) but not on the same day: How is that possible?*

In 1616 England was still using the calendar promulgated by Julius Caesar. England didn't adopt the modern Gregorian calendar until 1752.

9. *Before Madrid, what city was the capital of Spain?*

Toledo. An important Roman city, Toledo became the capital of Visigothic Spain. During the period Moorish dominance, it was a center of "convivencia" between Christians, Muslims and Jews. After the Spanish re-conquest, Toledo was the capital until King Philip II moved his court to Madrid in the sixteenth century.

10. *Where did Spain's government send its national gold reserves in 1936?*

The Soviet Union. At the outset of Spanish Civil War, the Republican government sent 510 metric tons of gold to Moscow to purchase military supplies. Stalin celebrated this windfall with a banquet at which he said, *“The Spaniards will never see their gold again, just as they don't see their ears.”* And they never did.

11. How many Spanish martyrs were beatified on Oct 28, 2007?

498. Included in this number are Blessed Victor Chumillas and his twenty-one companions. Our World Youth Day delegation will celebrate Mass at their burial site in Toledo.

12. Who is the first POW (Prisoner of War) to become pope?

Pope Benedict. At age 16 Joseph Ratzinger was drafted into the German army. Strongly opposed to Nazism, he deserted at his first opportunity. American troops picked him up and put him into a Prisoner of War camp at Ulm. After being released, he returned to the seminary. Ordained a priest in 1951, this year he celebrates his 60th anniversary. Pope Benedict will be with World Youth Day delegates in Madrid from August 18-21.

The questions relate to our World Youth Day pilgrimage. On our first day we will visit the tombs of St. Francis and St. Clare in Assisi. In Rome we have the opportunity to pray at sites where Saints Peter and Paul shed their blood for Christ – and to celebrate Mass at the Quo Vadis Church. We will arrive in Spain for the 75th anniversary of many of its martyrs. The twelve day pilgrimage will be a time to pray, to learn and to reflect on God's plan.



I thank you for supporting our World Youth Day delegates. Besides the collection at Masses this Sunday, please consider coming to the Garage Sale this Friday and Saturday – and to the Spaghetti Feed and Bingo on July 16. For all young people of our parish, we will have a Youth Empowerment Morning on July 23, followed by a poker tournament for adults. On July 31 there will be “send off” and raffle drawing during our Parish Picnic. The Soccer Tournament will take place on August 6 and on August 10 we will show the Quo Vadis movie. On August 12 we depart for Rome and Madrid, but we still have significant fund raising to accomplish in the coming weeks.

And speaking of financial support, thank you for your support of the Annual Catholic Appeal and your faithful donations in our Sunday offerings. As you can see in the Stewardship section, during the past fiscal year, you gave a total of \$ 297,029.21 in Sunday offerings. In addition, 247 parishioners have pledged \$ 56,632.21 for the Annual Catholic Appeal. This means we have a potential rebate of \$11,516.21 that we will apply to parish projects. On July 20 our Building Commission we meet to discuss the specific renovation projects.

Next weekend I will be at Queen of Angels Parish in Port Angeles for a presentation on the Peru mission. Fr. Ramiro Casales will celebrate the Masses on July 8-9. Speaking of the Peru mission, I will be taking a “family delegation” to Peru on December 26. In 2012 I hope to take a “youth delegation.” More about that later. May God keep you safe this Fourth of July weekend – and may each of us recognize the gift and responsibility of being part of our great nation.

