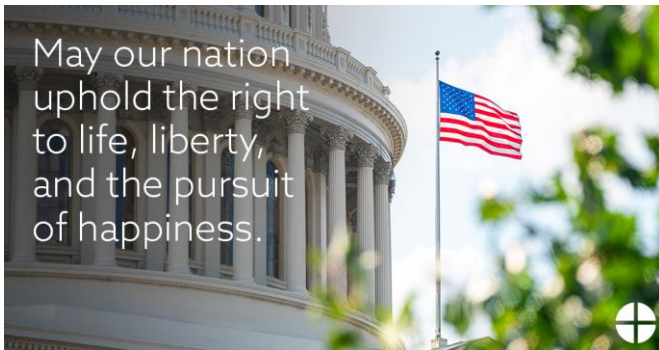


INTERCEDE



PRAY

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

REFLECT

This July we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America. In anticipation of this milestone, last month, the U.S. bishops consecrated our nation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Declaration of Independence boldly affirms that first among our inalienable rights is the right to life, given to us by the Creator. Yet despite being so solemnly proclaimed, the right to life is today threatened and often denied, particularly at the moments when life is most fragile. The laws of our nation should—first and foremost—protect life. For “there can be no true democracy without a recognition of every person’s dignity and without respect for his or her rights” (*Evangelium vitae*, 101).

In the Gospel, Jesus tells us that we are “*the salt of the earth*” and “*the light of the world*” (Mt. 5:13-14). As Catholics, we have a duty to pursue the common good and a profound obligation to safeguard this most fundamental right to life. Each of us is called to live out our faith publicly, witnessing to the Gospel. For, “*if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be*

thrown out and trampled underfoot” (Mt. 5:13). Nor can we hide our faith under the “*bushel basket*,” rather, our “*light must shine before others*” (Mt. 5:15-16).

Through our own prayer, witness, and civic participation, we can help our nation to answer the call to protect the lives of all people. We pray that Catholics will faithfully embrace their Christian responsibility and be strengthened when they encounter resistance or persecution. Together, may we help build a culture of life and civilization of love in our nation.

ACT (choose one)

- Offer this “Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus”: uscgb.org/prayers/prayer-sacred-heart-jesus.
- Choose one day this week to fast from entertainment. Refrain from television, movies, social media, and non-spiritual reading.
- Offer some other sacrifice or prayer that you feel called to do for this month’s intention.

ONE STEP FURTHER

Learn more about the Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and ways you can participate and pray for our nation during its 250th year: uscgb.org/consecration-united-states-sacred-heart-jesus.

