Hello Friends and Parishioners of St. Monica,

Happy 4th of July! Hope this finds you well. This is such a great week as we commemorate the day of our independence. Maybe most you are preparing to commemoration this day by getting together as family or friends, travelling in order to be with our significant other or even taking a day off to relax with family. These are all good things to do for they enhance what we actually celebrate, the gift of freedom. But above and beyond maybe its also a day we stop and ask, what does freedom mean to me and in the society I live in.

To many people in our modern day, the notion of freedom means the ability to do whatever you want. One even sometimes hears children claim, “I can’t wait until I grow up, then, I can do whatever I want.” But, freedom does not mean doing what we want, but doing what we ought. We are not free if immoral actions and beliefs rule or lives.

The inevitable consequence of abusing freedom is loosing freedom. Bad habits which start out as cobwebs can end up as chains. Our Lord himself says, the man who sins is the slave of sin. We must live in truth and act in truth if we are to remain free.

The motto of the United States Army Special Forces is: *De oppresso liber*, to free the oppressed. And isn’t that the job of every Christian. For indeed, Jesus came to set captives free, to bring the light of truth to those in the darkness of ignorance, and we are to continue his work.

One way of celebrating our freedom is to be mindful of those who are still in shackles of poverty and daily financial struggles, especially those who that have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As an effort to bring change, enact freedom and be a beacon of hope in their lives, our Food Pantry in conjunction with Stewardship committee are organizing a **TOILETRIES DRIVE**. All our parishoners are requested to bring toiletries as they come to Mass on Sundays or bring their donation to St. Monica Building (FOOD PANTRY) on Mondays. The drive will run from June 28th to August 3rd 2020. We as a church are called to be the change we want to see in our community and one way of being that change is to bring hope to those that are down trodden. On the hand, the gift of Freedom prompts us to do what we ought to do to the ‘least of these’. May God bless your generosity!

Happy 4th of July

Fr. Leonard