

THE AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

Independence Day



(flemingstrategic.com)

Today, July 4, 2022, we celebrate the 246th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of the once fledgling but now most powerful nation in the world, our beloved United States of America.

Independence Day is always a time for celebration with the accompanying parades, picnics, barbecues, hotdogs, hamburgers, fireworks, etc., weather permitting. The day of celebrating freedom is enjoyed by all.

But this treatise is about independence day of an adolescent growing up in this great country when he reaches the age of 18. The American family system seemed to have set up the age of 18 as the basis of letting their adolescent children seek independence and living on their own. In some cases, while the children were still growing up to adolescence, they were already given the freedom in their own households of what to do with their time inside and outside the house with the parents just coming along as chaperones. This freedom provided to growing children and to adolescents is fraught with dangers and the proverbial pitfalls that lay across the road they will travel.

Dangers and Pitfalls Awaiting The Young Adult

There seems to be some solid psychological and maturity bases for this 'letting go' practice but **the spiritual dangers** to the adolescent seems to have to be a non-factor for this societal action. Physically and mentally, an adolescent would seem capable of striking out on his own. But the spiritual side of life controls the emotional capability of a person. A young adult could get a good job, also go to college to get a degree and be successful professional in his chosen field. But in the process, he might have been changed from a good, practicing Catholic to **a vibrant agnostic**. From a healthy individual to one **addicted** to the hemp products and its derivatives or more powerful chemical stimulators. Hemp though legally allowed as a medicine, when used as a recreational vice could lead to mental health issues.

How many persons have we met, who when young were good practicing Catholics, and after college have lost all the religious instructions that they have learned and become the opposite what they used to be. Some of them were even proud to have 'learned the truth?' about the Catholic faith and converted to be **the staunchest enemy of our religion**.

According to the **American Addiction Center website**, marijuana the most common drug used for recreational use may have the impression of being a harmless, fun substance, it is still **a drug that changes what goes on in the mind**, sometimes with **significant consequences**. The **long-term effects on the brain and body** make marijuana **a dangerous** drug to a lot of people, leading to **negative outcomes that don't show until years later**. Effects of marijuana from long-term use may include:

- **memory issues**
- **anxiety**
- **depression**

- lower dopamine¹ production
- lung damage
- persistent cough
- greater risk for heart attacks, diseases, and stroke

Heroin, cocaine and other stimulants **do worse** to the body than hemp but still some successful professionals do use them for the 'class status' of being able to afford them.

Drug use by these newly independent young adults could have severe and tragic consequences. An example of one is a pretty Catholic girl of good upbringing who died in the hands of a serial killer while working as a street walker². From a good Catholic home to a murdered prostitute? The parents could not understand this tragic ending to their daughter. It turned out that in college, she tried drugs, became addicted and sold her body to gain more of the same until she met the avenger³. By the episodes seen on detective true stories, it seemed that God's justice is **more severe** on Catholics who should know better.

Is there any formula for avoiding such disasters? A good Catholic upbringing coupled with **constant reminders** and **persevering prayers** would suffice.

CONSTANT REMINDERS

This method might be too controlling but one should tell the son/daughter, that **a parent's top responsibility is to bring them to God's realm**. That as a parent, **if the child is lost**, subsequently, the parent will answer to God for this. Children should be able to understand this. Other responsibilities, food, shelter, good education are all secondary to this.

St. Alphonsus Di Liguori's sermon, "**Advice to Parents**" is **a must read** for all parents willing to obey their responsibility to God in bringing them to Heaven.

It is available at https://www.olrl.org/snt_docs/advice.shtml

This writer know of a grandparent who read this sermon of St. Alphonsus together with the advice of that childhood rearing guru, Benjamin Spock.

Mr. Spock taught that infants should be taught all the good lessons to be imparted to them starting at **six months to two years, inclusive!**

The two granddaughters he helped raised grew up to be good students, athletes and Christians with good strong characters. These children were always included in their nightly prayers and always reminded that this pleases God and gains His love, mercy and protection. Those two granddaughters **always behaved in Church**, from infancy to the present.

Parents have to remind their children that **only saints go to Heaven**; and that **the devil comes in all sizes and forms**, i.e. beautiful man and woman with good communication and charismatic skills, **to take them away** from God, together with **bad movies, TV shows, parties** etc. not conducive to salvation.

Hell should always be a place that **a child should avoid**. Reading to children the physical description of Hell as seen by the saints and mystics, will them dread of going there.

The best example of this is this writer's parents. They would always remind him of Hell whenever he commits major mistakes in the family. Those ringing words helped this writer always pray to God for forgiveness for every

¹ Dopamine is a medication form of a substance that occurs naturally in the body. In the brain, dopamine functions as a neurotransmitter – a chemical released by neurons (nerve cells) to send signals to other nerve cells. Outside the central nervous system, dopamine functions primarily as a local paracrine messenger. In blood vessels, it inhibits norepinephrine release and acts as a vasodilator (at normal concentrations); in the kidneys, it increases sodium excretion and urine output; in the pancreas, it reduces insulin production; in the digestive system, it reduces gastrointestinal motility and protects intestinal mucosa; and in the immune system, it reduces the activity of lymphocytes. With the exception of the blood vessels, dopamine in each of these peripheral systems is synthesized locally and exerts its effects near the cells that release it. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dopamine>)

² This example is a true story given to make everyone aware of the pitfalls of independence by young adults when they get swallowed up by the hedonistic lifestyles of college life. These tragic events are given by the Lord so that others would avoid occasions and bad company that lead away from Him.

³ But if thou do that which is evil, **fear**: for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is God's minister: **an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil**. (Romans 13:4-5)

error made. All his life, he says this prayer, after the Act of Contrition, whenever he sinned: “Lord have mercy on me; forgive me my sins and please don’t throw me to Hell.” Constant reminder of Hell and its eternal residency for those who land there, did work on this writer.

CONSTANT PRAYERS

The current custom of ending parental responsibility also seemed to occur at the 18th age of a child. That is far from the truth. Parental responsibility continues till one has brought all their children to Heaven, regardless of age. What? Who taught us this? God, Himself! He set an example in the Scriptures.

Remember the story of Samuel, the prophet, when he was still a youth and heard someone calling him four times?⁴ He went to the high priest Heli and told him about it. Heli told him after the fourth time to say, “Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth.”

And what did God tell Samuel? God told Samuel to tell Heli that He would inflict severe judgment on Heli’s sons who have done wickedly and whom Heli had not corrected. Heli in his humble contrition accepted the judgment of God. His sons were killed by the invading Philistines who also stole the Ark of the Covenant. Upon hearing the news of the devastating defeat of the Israelites and the loss of the Ark of the Covenant, Heli fell backwards from his stool, hit his head hard and died⁵.

Things to consider: Heli was 98 years old! His wicked sons must be in their 70’s. The wicked sons paid for their sins and the negligent parent did the same. So this gives us proof that God has given parents the responsibility to take their children to Heaven by constant prayers and reminders until all of them get there! Severe penalty is paid for failure to do so!

So responsible parenthood coupled with constant prayers should be the new normal of Catholic parents who want to go to Heaven with their children.

The Independence Day that one should look for is the freedom of our souls from this earth when we make it to God’s bosom and enjoy His glory forever in Heaven.



⁴ From 1Kings 3:4-18

⁵ 1Kings Chapter 4