

# *Passion of the Patriots*

Tuesday, July the Fourth, is a celebration of the birth of our nation. Because of the freedoms guaranteed us by the Constitution and the blessings we enjoy, it may be easy to take for granted what the founding fathers created, and the sacrifices – including the lives of some – to make it happen.

It is a very precious gift these men and women gave us, and it is now ours to cherish and preserve.

Understanding the passion of these patriots hopefully will inspire us with their same zeal. Here is what three of them had to say about our nation and its governance:

- **George Washington:** “To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving the peace ... Be courteous to all, but intimate with few, and let those few be well tried before you give them your confidence. True friendship is a plant of slow growth, and must undergo and withstand the shocks of adversity before it is entitled to the appellation ... Few men have virtue to withstand the highest bidder.”
- **Patrick Henry:** “Gentlemen may cry peace, peace – but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms. Our brethren are already in the field. Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death! ... That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of the conscience; and it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity toward each other.”
- **Thomas Jefferson:** “We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable; that all men are created equal and independent, that from that equal creation they derive rights inherent and inalienable, among which are the preservation of life, and liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ... I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that His justice cannot sleep forever ... The boisterous sea of liberty is never without a wave.”

Let us celebrate this Independence Day with their thoughts, and the mantle of their resolve, in our minds.

– Beecher Hunter