

A View from the Pew

by Deacon Greg Kandra

Fireworks

If anyone wonders about the existence of God, just look up at the sky this Fourth of July. He will be there—in every pinwheel, Roman candle and sparkler. He will be there, in the glittering reds and the triumphant blues and the effervescent greens.

He will be there in the cacophonous bangs and the hazy smoke. He will be there in the wonder of children, who cover their ears and open their eyes and scream with delight.

He will be there in all the light illuminating the dark. He will be there because fireworks, I think, are God's confetti. He has good reason for tossing it into the skies every July 4. He will be celebrating. And so will we. This year, once again, we made it.

America has experienced wars. And we made it.

We've watched politicians throw mud at each other. And we made it.

Temperatures fall and gas prices climb. And we made it.

We Americans are tenacious. We put up with a lot. We quarrel and scream at each other a lot. But at the end of the day, we can gaze up at the skies and see explosions of color and light, and feel a collective lump in our throats. We have been through much. But we have been through it together, and become better because of it.

It is that way, too, with our church. For a while, every day seemed to bring another bad headline. And we made it.

Sometimes, you have to wonder how we did it. The differences among us can be striking. Like our country, we Catholics are a big and unruly bunch, aren't we? It is easy to forget that our name means "universal"—that we worship under a large tent, full of sinners and saints, all crowded elbow-to-elbow, gathering every Sunday not only to attend our faith, but to *celebrate* it.

And there is so much to celebrate: salvation and miracles, redemption and resurrection. We celebrate a hope that could not be confined to the wood of the cross, or contained in the rock of the tomb. And in the midst of that celebration, God generously hurls His grace. It falls freely on the worthy and unworthy, like those patriotic sparklers lighting the night.

We have been through much, and we made it. Christ's life, death and resurrection is a reminder of how we have endured, and what we can overcome.

So this week, celebrate. Look to the heavens and enjoy the fireworks—the ones in the sky, and the ones that God so exuberantly sets off in our hearts.

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