



# Dehonians USA

PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART

July 4, 2026

Dear Confreres,

In recent weeks, the United States has hosted FIFA World Cup matches in cities across the country. Fans from around the world are arriving, many experiencing America for the first time. They are not just seeing the America often portrayed negatively in international media, but rather the America reflected in its people, landscapes, and everyday life.



I have seen numerous social media videos in which visitors praise the country's vast, beautiful, and diverse landscapes. They also notice that this diversity is reflected in its people. Many comment on the genuine warmth and friendliness of everyday Americans, especially in the South. They are amused by the massive highway systems, large stores such as

Walmart and Target, generous food portions, and endless drink refills. They may be puzzled by the tipping culture, but above all, they seem surprised by the openness and kindness they encounter.

As an immigrant who has lived in the United States for more than two-thirds of my life and calls this country home, I share many of these sentiments. I have found Americans to be remarkably welcoming. Strangers often greet one another with a smile, a friendly "hello" or "how are you?", and direct eye contact. There is a general openness toward strangers—a willingness to strike up a

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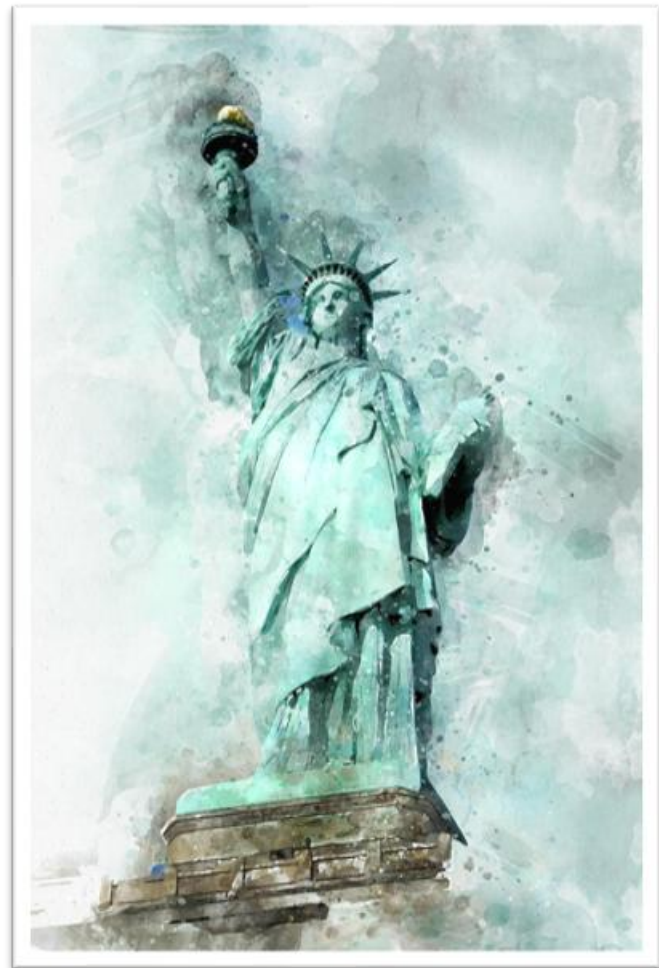
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conversation in a coffee shop, at a sporting event, or while waiting in line. Such interactions help create a sense of belonging and safety.

I would also add that America remains a land of opportunity, particularly in education and economic advancement. For those who are determined and willing to work hard, the “American Dream” is still within reach. Personally, I greatly admire an educational system that encourages creativity, critical thinking, and independent thought rather than mere memorization.

The people’s spirit of openness is also reflected in a strong tradition of charitable giving and community volunteering. For example, our apostolates exist because of the generosity of countless individuals. Without their support, St. Joseph’s Indian School, Sacred Heart Southern Missions, and Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology would not exist. Moreover, their generosity enables us to support our various missions in the Congregation.

As our country celebrates its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, let us celebrate the many colors, cultures, and traditions that enrich it. Together, they are what make America both beautiful and strong.



Happy Fourth of July!

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V. Lee'.