

Barbara's *Wastepaper Record*:

I saw an eagle today. Driving up 684. I watched a white tail and a white head and a great span of feathered wings circling over head in the thermals of the blacktopped highway. Seeing the real creature alive and in the air was a deep thrill. It was a glimpse of the spirit of life free and joyous, fully alive to the day!

It is a symbol of America. I have had some varied response to the symbol of the eagle in my life. I thought of America this week. I thought about the controversy and misinformation and intolerance swirling in our national airwaves and within Americans of the many faith traditions that live here. It is the controversy surrounding the Cordoba Center or the Park 51 Muslim Community Center, intended to be built in lower Manhattan, a few blocks from the World Trade Center Memorial site.

Freedom of religion, coupled with the ever essential separation of church and state, are among America's core values, and sources of its strength. I share with you these words of George Washington, from his letter to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, RI. August 1790.

Gentlemen:

...If we have wisdom to make the best use of the advantages with which we are now favored, we cannot fail, under the just administration of a good government, to become a great and happy people.

The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy, a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship.

It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it were the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights, for, happily, the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid.

May the father of all mercies scatter light, and not darkness, upon our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in His own due time and way everlastingly happy. G. Washington

This is Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Saturday is September 11th. Let us remember the foundations of this country. The liberal impulses of its founders, and the larger liberty we now enjoy and are called upon to preserve. May we affirm the spirit of life in all peoples, and creatures, indeed the spirit of life in all creation, each in our own way. I look forward to gathering with you to celebrate our community with you on Sunday. Be well. Keep the Faith. May you have a good year. *Barbara*

My office hours are: Tuesday 3-6, Wednesday 2-4, Friday 2-5 and by appointment. Thursdays I write the sermon and Mondays are my day off.