

I've been looking forward my first Placitas Independence Day parade. It sounds like a fun event, where the community comes together and celebrates. It's comforting that, in these politically turbulent times, we can find things to celebrate and ways to come together. There are a lot of divisions in the nation right now, and they shouldn't be trivialized. It matters when people don't feel safe, when groups of people are increasingly marginalized and feel unsafe. At times like this, we need to speak up on behalf of the most vulnerable and against the things that would harm them. But how do we do both? We often hear that, if you love your country, you don't criticize it. You celebrate the good instead of pointing out the bad. However, I don't think that works. To love anything or anyone, I think it's important to be honest. In the Bible, Job brought everything to God, even when all he had were questions, criticisms, and complaints. He didn't give up on the relationship, even when it felt like God had given up on him. In the end, God praised Job for his honesty and criticized his friends for dishonestly trying to justify his suffering. So, celebrate the dream of America this July 4, but don't forget that the dream is incomplete as long as anyone who lives here suffers from discrimination and injustice. Love the nation with the kind of love that will help it realize the dream of liberty and justice for all. As my favorite patriotic hymn says:

America! America!
God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control,
Thy liberty in law!