

*Carissimi,*

One of the great challenges posed by the modern worldview to the Gospel is the notion of untrammelled human autonomy. The word itself comes from *auto* (self) + *nomos* (law). Thus autonomy is 'self-law,' or a 'law unto oneself.'

Man was indeed created free. But that very notion reveals that man's freedom is a gift from Something greater than himself. That is, man is not so free as to have created himself. He had nothing to do with coming into existence. Neither is our freedom, once given to us, actually limitless. Recall death and you'll see the point (if you're humble).

Furthermore, we may indeed happen to be capable of doing some particular action (we could have the physical, technical and psychological freedom to pull it off), but that kind of freedom does not connote *moral* freedom. And moral freedom is the kind that counts, because in exercising it (for the good) man gains virtue and his dignity increases. That is what we're looking for – real freedom.

What did Our Lord say about the matter? In John 8:32 His words are there for all to read: "*You will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free.*"

Truth and freedom go together. Freedom alone, ironically, leads to moral anarchy and slavery. The question then to ask is not, "What do I *want* to do, or what *can* I do?" Rather, it is, "What *ought* I to do?" Go on, ask yourselves that, about anything. It's the key to making one's way through the maze of this life.

But all this seems to go over the heads of the brainwashed mobs we see on our TVs chanting, "Freedom of choice!" Choices have consequences. And what they are really saying is that they want no interference from anyone else when they do what they want, for good or evil. And the rest of the world is expected to wring it's hands and apologize for taking offense when the *nouveaux libres* kill their unborn babies or defile each others bodies in the sexual frenzies of lust. We are being asked to acquiesce, lay down our principles and be good little subjects of the tyranny of those who have been self-emancipated from the Truth about God, man and the world. And if we don't? Well then there will be horrible temper-tantrums and cries of theocracy and Nazism! We will be shouted down and told we are anti-choice, anti-woman and just plain nuts because we hold that killing the unborn is bad for both mother and child. It is a struggle against irrationalism in the guise of the human freedom movement, like a disorienting tonic concocted by some mad quack social scientist.

Next Monday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, is the annual March for Life. On the surface it is a protest against legalized abortion in America. But at a deeper level it is a cry for the restoration of sanity and order in our society. It is a call for freedom responsibly exercised and freedom in the Truth.

Jesus said, "*I have come to give testimony to the Truth.*" Pilate, that cynical gubernator, retorted, "*And what is the Truth?*" - as if to say that there is none and that all devolves to power and will and political machinations.

But we Catholics stand for a diametrically opposed worldview. We stand for Truth, and as a consequence we stand for true Freedom.

This is a fight worth fighting, my dear coreligionists, compatriots and co-Northern Neckers. So I sincerely hope you will consider joining us this year as we march on Washington to send the message that the advocates of Truth and Freedom have not yet been vanquished in our fair land.

*Excelsior!*  
Don Francesco