

Deacon Tony's Homily for June 28, 2015 – the 13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

We are entering the second week of the US Catholics Bishop's **FORTNIGHT FOR FREEDOM**. A call for concentrated prayer and study of the theme of "FREEDOM TO BEAR WITNESS".

"Keeping the spirit of the Gospel means that Catholic institutions, as well as all Catholics, are to bear witness in love to the full truth about the human person by providing social, charitable, and educational services in a manner that fully reflects the God-given dignity of the human person."

Let us reflect a little about the WITNESS that we are showing the world around us.

The fortnight includes the feast days of such great examples of faith as Sts. Peter and Paul, St John Fisher and our own St Thomas More. All who put their love of God before their own lives and were outstanding witnesses to TRUTH in their time.

With some of the legal setbacks that religious institutions are experiencing, we must **never allow our beliefs to bend when it comes to knowing who we are, and where we belong in God's overall plan of salvation.**

The first fortnights of freedom came about as a reaction to the Health and Human Services' contraceptive mandate marked a more hostile climate for employers who refused to comply with a federal rule that forced them to violate their religious beliefs by providing co-pay-free abortion-inducing drugs, among other provisions.

No matter what the courts rule, we must stay aware of the first lines in the first reading from Wisdom:

"God does not make death, nor does He rejoice in the destruction of the living."

And I might add – BORN AND UNBORN.

Just as the first reading calls us to respect unborn life the second reading calls us to share from our abundance in the spirit of Jesus who chose to share in our humanity.

From the opening homily of Archbishop of Baltimore William Lori:

"Let us keep in the forefront of our hearts the millions of people who are served by Catholic humanitarian agencies, by Catholic Charities, by parishes, and by generous individuals throughout these United States. Let us look at them not merely as statistics but as persons created in God's image and called to enjoy friendship with God, that friendship which, by God's grace, we have found in the Eucharist. We are seeking for the Church and for Church institutions no special privileges. We are seeking the freedom to serve, or as Pope Francis once put it, the freedom to proclaim and live the Gospel "in its entirety". May we find in the Eucharist the source and summit of our charity and in that charity may we advocate by word and witness for the robust freedom of individuals and churches not only to worship without fear but indeed serve others and the common good in in love, truth, joy, and freedom.

And finally in the Gospel we see throngs of people crowding around Jesus and two reaching out of the throng to actually touch Him in a very personal way in order to seek His blessing.

A woman desperate for relief of 12 years of suffering and a man named Jairus who feared losing his daughter. We need always to be ready to leave the crowd and get to

know Jesus and not just to know about Him. May we also always be concerned about our children's spiritual health and be the WITNESS that Our Lord is calling us to be them.