

Day 3 ★ June 23, 2017

Reflections for the FORTNIGHT FOR FREEDOM

These reflections and readings from the Vatican II document Declaration on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae) are intended for daily use during the Fortnight for Freedom, a national campaign designated by the U.S. Catholic bishops for teaching and witness in support of religious liberty. The readings and the questions that follow can be used for group discussion or for personal reflection.

Further light is shed on the subject if one considers that the highest norm of human life is the divine law—eternal, objective, and universal—whereby God orders, directs, and governs the entire universe and all the ways of human community, by a plan conceived in wisdom and love. Man has been made by God to participate in this law, with the result that, under the gentle disposition of divine Providence, he can come to perceive ever increasingly the unchanging truth. Hence every man has the duty, and therefore the right, to seek the truth in matters religious, in order that he may with prudence form for himself right and true judgments of conscience, with the use of all suitable means.

Truth, however, is to be sought after in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature. The inquiry is to be free, carried on with the aid of teaching or instruction, communication, and dialogue. In the course of these, men explain to one another the truth they have discovered, or think they have discovered, in order thus to assist one another in the quest for truth. Moreover, as the truth is discovered, it is by a personal assent that men are to adhere to it.

*Declaration on Religious Liberty
(Dignitatis Humanae), no. 3
December 7, 1965*

Reflection for Day Three

God is the author of all truth and all good. All of what is true and good in our world and cosmos finds its source in God, the Creator of all. Moreover, what is true and good about ourselves as human beings finds its source in God in that he created us in his image and likeness. Thus, for the Council Fathers, all that exists is in conformity with the divine law, the providential plan of God.

Because of this, the Council emphasizes that truth must be “sought after in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature.” This means that human beings must be free to seek the truth. However, human beings do not seek the truth as isolated individuals. The search for the truth is common to all, and so all share in the finding of truth and all share in the receiving of truth from others. Because the search for truth, the finding of truth, and the sharing of truth is a social exercise, human beings must not only be free to search for truth in the hope of finding it, they must also be free to communicate and discuss together the truth they believe they have found. It is through our free assent that we each personally lay hold of the truth.

What are the contemporary means of seeking, finding, and sharing truth? In what ways can this freedom to seek, to find, and to share be inhibited?



**Fortnight
for Freedom
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**Freedom for Mission
June 21 – July 4**

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