



5 July 2009

*14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*

Dear Parishioners,

On Independence Day and at this time of year, we remember our freedom: a freedom we too often take for granted. Much of our world is not free in ways we enjoy. The current situation in Iran and the recent 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tiananmen Square in China are stark reminders of that.

However, I believe the concept of freedom in this nation of ours can lack integrity and depth due to a pervasive individualism. For some, freedom means nothing more than: my right to possess a gun; my right to die in the way I choose; my right to abortion. It's a free country and I'm free to do as I please.

Now I don't mean to sound flippant. But the notion of freedom is too often distorted and misunderstood in ways that limit rather than free us. In a journal essay, Thomas Merton writes:

***Too much emphasis on one's own truth, one's own authentic freedom and one forgets the limitations and restrictions of this "my own". Tendency to take "my own" truth and freedom as unlimited, ultimate... This is a total loss.***

Something essential is lost when the focus of my freedom is nothing more than me. In the Sunday Seattle Times I try and read the "Rant & Rave" column each week. In the "Rants" we're made to see the selfish, ugly side of human nature: those who are insensitive to and heedless of others. They live their freedom only with themselves in view. And, let's face it: there's a little bit of the 'rant' in each of us at times. Whereas the "Raves" help us see that life can be otherwise. These people live their freedom responsibly and with others in mind. They offer hope and, without fanfare, redeem the Seattle metropolitan area!

Freedom that has nothing more than "my own" agenda in mind is a freedom that impoverishes. For freedom to be vital and life-giving it must be yoked to responsibility. In that way it affirms that we belong one to another and possess, with all our diversity and pluralism, one common origin. We are, all of us, part of a greater whole: a vast Mystery that shapes our destiny and makes the many, one: E Pluribus Unum...

I wish all of you a Happy Fourth of July. And may God, who is that vast Mystery, deepen in the heart of this nation the interior freedom grace offers.

*Fa. Tim Clank*

Pastor