

Homily for 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday July 5<sup>th</sup> 2015 . The day after Independence Day.

“Where did this man get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him?” words taken from the gospel that we have just heard proclaimed.

Jesus, the Word made flesh.

Jesus, THE prophet from God.

Jesus, THE way, THE truth and THE life.

Jesus teaching in his home town of Nazareth offends the congregation in the synagogue. “Who does he think he is speaking to us like that and he a mere carpenter!”

Today’s readings about rebellion and human weakness have something loud to tell us on the weekend when we have been celebrating as a nation our freedom.

We have been celebrating our country’s freedom from living under the yoke of a tyrannical king. And this celebration is good.

Freedom IS a great good. God who IS Love, created us in his image, that is to say as persons, with free will and a capacity to know and understand, therefore as persons capable of love.

But in our country we have made ‘freedom’ a kind of God.

Madeleine Delbrel concisely described the limitations of our freedom when she wrote:

“Freedom is so dazzling a good that we come to depend on it blindly for our deliverance. But in itself it has no power to do this. It remains the daughter of truth.”

Madeleine expresses this well. If freedom is not linked to truth it cannot bring ‘Salvation’; it cannot lead to our happiness, our wholeness, our holiness whether as individuals or as a nation.

Jesus, is the Savior.

“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life’

and in the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel of John:

“If you make my word your home

you will indeed be my disciples, you will

learn the truth and the truth will make you free.” (Jn: 8 : 31)

Linked to Jesus, our ‘yoke is easy and our burden light’.

Linked to untruth, linked to error, our ‘yoke’ is a new form of tyranny.

When the Supreme Court of our nation changes the definition of ‘marriage’ from the union of one man and one woman to include the union of two people of the same sex this is what has happened.

This changing the meaning of the word has major consequences.

It is analogous to what St John Paul wrote in the Gospel of Life referring to the evil of abortion. He wrote:

“Given such a grave situation, we need now even more than ever to have the courage to look truth in the eye and to

call things by their proper name without yielding to convenient compromises or to the temptation of self-deception.” (Gospel of Life #58)

I submit that the change of the definition of the sacred word of ‘marriage’ which, after all, is used to describe the whole love relationship of God with human beings from Genesis to Revelation is appalling in ways that we have yet to discover and evaluate.

May I end by reading my translation of a meditation on Freedom written by Madeleine Delbrel. It expresses in an eloquent way how by becoming, through grace, the captive of Christ we share in the unbounded freedom which putting on the mind of Jesus involves:

## A CHRISTIAN IS A CAPTIVE

A Christian is a captive,  
the captive of a life: the life of Christ.  
He is not the propagandist of an idea  
but the member of a body which is alive  
and wants to grow.

He is a captive of a way of thinking,  
he is not a free thinker  
nor the propagandist of an idea  
but the voice of another:  
the voice of his Master.

He is a captive of a surge of energy:  
of a desire that is as large as God,  
a desire that wants to save what is lost,  
heal what is sick,  
unite what is separated,  
always and everywhere.

To be a Christian is to be the captive  
of a state of being,  
the captive of dimensions  
that are no longer our own,  
the captive, if I may put it this way,  
of a freedom which has been chosen in advance for us.

It is in this state of captivity  
that the missionary  
must announce the Christ  
who is his life,  
must announce the message  
which he has received  
and must not modify,

must transmit a message of salvation  
that does not come from him  
and which is destined to reach  
the limits of the world.

He cannot modify  
this Christ who is his life.

He is his captive.

He cannot restrain this salvation.

He is its captive.

May we take a minute of silent prayer to ponder these things.