



Scripture

Old Testament: "Wash, make yourselves clean, take your wrong-doing out of my sight. Cease to do evil. Learn to do good, search for justice, help the oppressed, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, let us talk this over, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool." Isaiah 1:16-18 from the Breviary.

New Testament: "The kind of religion which is without stain or fault in the sight of God our Father is this: to go to the help of orphans and widows in their distress and keep oneself untarnished by the world." James 1: 27 from the Breviary.

Catechism

"Freedom is the God-given power to be able to act of one's own accord; a person who is free no longer acts under the influence of someone else." YOUCAT # 286

Comment

Article 18 of the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights declared the following:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Sadly, there are many countries around the world that either ignore the above human right, pay mere lip-service to it or interpret it in such a way as to promote an intolerance that favours the majority whilst stifling the liberty of individuals and other communities. Such countries may actively persecute Christians or create the conditions in which fundamentalism, ignorance, hatred and violence can spread unabated.

Organisation of the month

Christian Solidarity Worldwide is an ecumenical Christian charity that specialises in religious freedom. It seeks to raise awareness whilst providing advocacy for individuals

and information for relevant government departments and international bodies. Visit www.csw.org.uk for more information.

Pray, Think, Act

Pray: that God the Father, through His Son Jesus Christ and in His Name may, by the power of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of Mary, Help of Christians, inspire and empower you to live out your prophetic calling received at baptism, that you may speak up and speak out for our persecuted and oppressed Christian brothers and sisters around the world during Lent and beyond.

Think: If it were illegal to be a Christian, with all Christians actions outlawed, how many times do you think that you would be in trouble with the police?

Act: Visit www.csw.org.uk for more ways in which you can support its aims, including by donations.

*"Do as much as you can. God will do what we ourselves cannot do."
St John Bosco, Letter to Cagliero, November 13, 1875*