

In 1776 England was the enemy. King George vetoed laws, dissolved representative houses, squelched elections, and imposed taxes without the consent of the people. We declared our independence as a nation and built our country upon the great ideal of freedom. Not an irresponsible, do-whatever-you-please freedom, but a freedom based on mutual responsibility. In our freedom we framed a constitution of law; not as a limit to freedom, but as its expression.

Yesterday the Supreme Court upheld Missouri's abortion laws. It was a decision that many will criticize as an affront to freedom. The immediate impact on the number of abortions performed will be small. What is most significant about yesterday's decision is that it will rattle the conscience of our nation, and of the Catholic Church in the United States. Fully 31% of women procuring abortions in our country today are Catholics.

England was the enemy to freedom in 1776. Today the enemy to freedom is the self. In seeking protect our own interests we ignore the concerns of others. We have women seek abortions and men who shirk their responsibilities as fathers. When we seek only our personal freedom we will jeopardize the freedom of others.

Jesus promised he would send us the spirit of peace, a spirit who would remind us of everything he said. That spirit comes to us today as a spirit of true freedom. A freedom that works not just for ourselves, but for the world around us.

We thank God for our independence, even as we pledge our dependence on one another.