

- This weekend our country observes the sad anniversary that has occasioned our modern culture wars: the legalization of abortion in 1973.
- It's difficult to find an issue that has so divided the opinions of Americans and that has occasioned so much debate, protesting, and counter-protesting.
- On the eve of Friday's March for Life in Washington, DC, a group of protesters called Catholics for Choice projected an image onto the façade of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception that read: "Pro-Choice Catholics you are not alone."
- They did this while the national prayer vigil was going on.
- Over the years, there have been all sorts of counter-protesters to the March for Life. But this demonstration was particularly scandalous because it came from people professing to be Catholic, and it utilized one of our country's most sacred buildings.
- In response, the communications director for Catholics for Choice reported on Twitter that she is: "tired of feeling shame and stigma for being a pro-choice Catholic."
- Generally speaking, shame is an emotional response we have when we know we've done something wrong. And shame is generally relieved when we admit our wrong and ask for forgiveness. So, shame can be a good thing if it leads us back to God.
- While I cannot speculate if this woman has had an abortion herself, post-abortive women sometimes become militant in their pro-abortion stance as a way of justifying their sin rather than seeking the forgiveness and healing they so desperately need.
- Unfortunately, the Catholics for Choice who pulled off this scandalous stunt at America's largest Catholic church will not find real relief for their shame by what they've done.
- Peace and freedom from the shame we've incurred for our sins will only come from our Lord Jesus, Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Peace and freedom from shame will only come from embracing the Truth.
- Those who embrace a pro-abortion viewpoint fail to see the truth that abortion ends the life of an innocent baby and radically wounds those who participate in it.
- The pro-abortion crowd who rely on the mantra, "it's my body, it's my choice" fail to see the truth that it's *not* just their body they're dealing with. There's also the body of the unborn child in the mix.
- This failure to understand abortion for what it really is has led to the deaths of 62 million babies in the womb since 1973, and deeply wounded countless men and women who've participated in this diabolical sin. And it's divided our nation.
- Speaking of division, our 2nd reading today calls us to unity. But real unity can only be achieved when people are united in truth.
- Lies and falsehoods are uncomfortable and vexatious – and for all their sweet perfume, lies and falsehoods always have an underlying stench, even if only subtly.
- Thus lies and falsehoods do not have the staying power to create unity, for there's a tipping point at which the discomfort of the lie will outweigh the benefits gained from it.
- The problem is that, throughout the course of history, man nevertheless has often positioned himself as an enemy of truth. In order to fulfill his own political agenda, man often tries to distort, bend, or even destroy truth.
- And when this happens, whenever the truth is suppressed, hidden, or distorted, evil is the necessary result. The 20th century has given us numerous examples to prove this.

- Because of the inability of lies to bring about true unity, those who suppress or distort the truth in order to promote a certain political agenda must always resort to totalitarian tactics in order to achieve their goals.
- Yet in the long run, truth can never be fully destroyed. While man may be able to hide it, distort it, or suppress it – even for many decades, as did the Soviets in Russia – truth always has a way of eventually making itself known.
- There is a tenacious and irrepressible quality to truth that makes it attractive and hard to resist to anyone of good will. And there's also a healing capacity in the Truth.
- As Christians we know that this is because truth is not a thing or simply an idea or concept. Truth is a Person: our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- And we can see the attraction to our Lord, Who Is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and the healing that comes from embracing Him in our Gospel today.
- We see Jesus in His hometown of Nazareth, where He enters the synagogue on the Sabbath and reads a passage from Isaiah that sets the tone for the public ministry He is about to begin.
- He tells His fellow townspeople that He has come to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, to heal the blind, to set free the oppressed, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.
- Jesus tells them that He has come to free them and to heal them. Over the course of His ministry, we see Him do exactly that – which is why so many people followed Him. They saw in Jesus the true revelation of God.
- Truth is supremely attractive to the hearts and minds of those whose hearts are set on God. It's like a magnet that pulls us, a light that draws us, a siren's song that induces us to leave all else behind.
- When our hearts are set on God, it's hard to resist Him when He makes Himself known to us. And in Him we find healing.
- Yet if our hearts are not pure, if our hearts are not intent on the things of God, then Truth can be repugnant. When we desire to do our own will rather than God's will, Truth can become decidedly inconvenient.
- Never will this be truer than on Judgment Day, when those who have rejected the Truth of our Lord will have to contend with the inconvenience of eternal damnation, while those who have submitted to His truth will be united with Him forever in Heaven.
- Brethren, we live in a time of great division – both in our country and in our Church.
- While both politicians and bishops alike often speak wistfully of unity, true unity can only be had when we submit ourselves to Truth – which is found in the Person of Jesus Christ and in the teachings of His one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church.
- And in this truth, we find healing, peace, and freedom from shame.
- So, if you feel overcome by shame from your past sins or are in need of healing and peace, turn to our Lord with contrition. Confess your sins, do penance, and amend your life.
- And then submit to our Lord and the teachings of His Church so that the unity we are all desire may become a reality.