



Capitol Comments:

Truth: A Light unto our Path and a Guide in our Actions as Advocates

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My alma mater, an illustrious public university in Texas, has the following inscription on the front of its main building: "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free."

In case you didn't know (I didn't - my mom pointed it out to me), this is a quote from Jesus (John 8:32). At first I wondered, "How can a public university get away with putting a quote from Jesus on the front of such a prominent building on campus?" But I soon answered it myself: Because it speaks the truth. Regardless of how you felt about the speaker, Jesus, you could not deny the truth in his statement - it reverberated and was affirmed in the very law written on all hearts.

Previously in our Comments, we've reiterated that the Church, individuals, businesses, nonprofits, other organizations, and **the** government must all work to promote the common good in our society. Specifically when advocating, we must remember that our elected officials represent us and our values. Our values and beliefs as Catholics must not be separated from our values and beliefs as citizens. It is appropriate and necessary for us to shine the light of truth, illuminated by our faith, in society through all of our actions, including advocacy.

When Catholics - whether Bishops or lay Catholics in the pews like myself - advocate on behalf of issues because of our faith, we come not to condemn but to bring the light of truth. In a sense, advocacy is not only political but evangelical. We are holding a light for justice and also for truth, a truth that is universal, a law written on the hearts of all, Catholic or otherwise.

Pope Benedict XVI wrote the following message to the Bishops of England and Wales this year, but his message also applies to us: "If the full saving message of Christ is to be presented effectively and convincingly to the world, the Catholic community in your country needs to speak with a united voice. This requires not only you, the Bishops, but also priests, teachers, catechists, writers -- in short all who are engaged in the task of communicating the Gospel -- to be attentive to the promptings of the Spirit, who guides the whole Church into the truth, gathers her into unity and inspires her with missionary zeal."

Holy Spirit, let this be our inspiration when we feel too tired to respond to an action alert, make a phone call, or otherwise contact our elected officials on behalf of the most vulnerable. When we feel weak and doubt the value of our advocacy actions, let us remember, as St. Teresa of Avila, Carmelite nun and Doctor of the Church once said: "*Christ has no body now but yours, No hands, no feet on earth but yours, Yours are the eyes through which He looks compassion on this world, Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*"

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