

Pretty much every American school kid knows that July 4, 1776 was the day the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia.

Perhaps less known is that on June 15, 1215 in Runnymede, England the Magna Carta was signed. And last week marked the 800th anniversary of that fateful day.

Prior to the signing of the Magna Carta, English kings were somewhat at liberty to act as they saw fit, for good or for ill. Enormous burdens through taxes and levies were common; as were arbitrary seizures of people, property, and cash by the Crown. The unchecked power of the monarchy led to widespread corruption.

Enter the Magna Carta – the Great Charter of Liberties – that ensured the right to own and inherit property, and protection from excessive taxation. Things we take for granted 800 years later – such as, the consent of the governed, due process, equal protection, and separation of church and state – find their origins in the Magna Carta.

Today is the 4th Sunday after Pentecost.

In St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he speaks about the "*eager expectation*" of all creation. Pointing out "*that creation itself [will] be set free from slavery to corruption.*"

In the Gospel, we hear Our Lord's admonition to St. Peter to "[p]ut out into deep water and lower [the] nets for a catch." While Peter protests – after all, it was the end of long hard day of work, and the fishermen had caught nothing at all.

Yet God has a plan. Despite what we may think. The result of Peter going against his own will and fulfilling Christ's command is a miracle: "*a great number of fish.*" So great, that "*their nets were tearing.*"

Indeed, regardless of how we may weigh our own circumstances, God remains in control. God's law, and God's plan overshadow our own plan. And no matter what we may consider as "freedom" . . . unrestrained liberty rapidly descends into license . . . what we often see played out in the world.

We must be reminded over and over ... that true freedom comes through Jesus Christ.

Yet are we fully convinced of this? Are we totally committed to living our lives through, with, and in Jesus Christ? When we think we have a better idea ... or perhaps when we don't get our way ... do we cast aside faithfulness and instead pursue our own whims? Or perhaps wade into the corruption of the world?

Saint Paul reminds us "*that we are children of God . . . heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ,*" but not through force of will, but rather "*if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.*"

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us put out into the deep. Let us step out in faith, setting aside any fears or misgivings ... and place ourselves in the hands of Our Savior. Let us remember that all Creation – ourselves included – is subject to the Laws of God and Reign of God ... and as members of the Body of Christ, we are called to be citizens of the Kingdom of God, and reign with Christ in eternity.