

# RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

## Pope Benedict XVI, Shepherd of Truth

Notable quotations from Pope Benedict XVI and official teachings  
of the Roman Catholic Church

### “AT THE HEART”

At the heart of every culture ... is a consensus about the nature of reality and the moral good and ... about the conditions for human flourishing. In America, that consensus, as enshrined in your nation's founding documents, was grounded in a worldview shaped not only by faith but a commitment to certain ethical principles deriving from nature and nature's God..

### SIGNIFICANT EROSION

Today that consensus has eroded significantly in the face of powerful new cultural currents which are not only directly opposed to core moral teachings of the Judeo-Christian tradition, but increasingly hostile to Christianity as such.

### KEY TO HAPPINESS

... The Church in the United States is called ... to proclaim a Gospel which not only proposes unchanging moral truths but proposes them precisely as the key to human happiness and social prospering ...

### THREAT TO HUMANITY

To the extent that some current cultural trends contain elements that would curtail the proclamation of these truths ... they represent a threat not just to Christian faith, but also to humanity itself ...



### “CRITICAL ROLE”

With her long tradition of respect for the right relationship between faith and reason, the Church has a critical role to play in countering cultural currents which, on the basis of extreme individualism, seek to promote notions of freedom detached from moral truth.

### CHURCH MUST NOT BE SILENT

The legitimate separation of Church and State cannot be taken to mean that the Church must be silent on certain issues, nor that the State may choose not to engage, or be engaged by, the voices of committed believers in determining the values which will shape the future of the nation.

### “GRAVE THREATS”

... It is imperative that the entire Catholic community in the United States come to realize the grave threats to the Church's public moral witness presented by a radical secularism which finds increasing expression in the political and cultural spheres ... Of particular concern are certain attempts being made to limit that most cherished of American freedoms, the freedom of religion.

### NEED FOR LAY ACTION

... We see the need for an engaged, articulate and well-formed Catholic laity, endowed with a strong critical sense vis-a-vis the dominant culture and with ... courage ...

(Source: *Ad limina* meeting with US bishops, 1/19/2012)

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