Reflections for the FORTNIGHT FOR FREEDOM

These reflections and readings from the Vatican II document Declaration on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae) are intended for daily use during the Fortnight for Freedom, a national campaign designated by the U.S. Catholic bishops for teaching and witness in support of religious liberty. The readings and the questions that follow can be used for group discussion or for personal reflection.

Reflection for Day Fourteen

In concluding its Declaration of Religious Freedom, the Council rejoices in the fact that religious freedom has been enshrined in the constitutions of many countries as well as in international statements. However, the Council Fathers are well aware that religious freedom is not guaranteed merely when it is stated on a piece of paper. It must be exercised by a living body of people. Moreover, there are actual governments that act against religious communities, sometime in the name of religion. The Council Fathers find such situations appalling and ask that Catholics and all people of goodwill work to rectify this injustice.

Since the Vatican Council, has religious freedom improved or deteriorated throughout the world? What is the relationship between growing religious diversity, as well as growing interactions among people of different faiths, and religious liberty?