

## Freedom, Naturally

I chuckled as Lady Gaga decried Vice-President Pence ‘as the worst representative of Christianity’ because his wife took a job at a school that defines freedom as reserving sexual love for marriage and thus requires employees to deny themselves other forms of behavior or identity. Gaga was nearly outdone by Ellen Page who branded fellow actor Chris Pratt a ‘hater’ for attending a church that believes similarly.

I guess Gaga and Page equate freedom with doing whatever one desires. To live one’s desires is to live free. Besides the absurdity of two women who pride themselves on being non-judgmental damning anyone who disagrees with them, I think it might help to say a few words on Christian freedom.

Christians certainly recognize that persons possess desire in many directions—Jesus Himself speaks of the heart as a fountain of feelings that can result in self-harm and damage to others (MK 7:14-23.) St. Paul takes this a step further when he theologized about the evident sexual immorality of ancient Rome; he claimed that humanity knows better and must suppress what they know in order to act unnaturally, under the power of enslaving desires (Rom. 1: 18-32). That rang true.

I was free to identify and behave homosexually but became a slave to my desires. Passion did not liberate but rather dominated me. Instead of learning to direct my sexuality in a way that engendered life in others, I became self-concerned and chaotic in seeking to find myself in a series of cracked mirrors. You could say I was being true to my bad self. That has a morbid integrity all its own but thank God for persons who advocated for me beyond the superficial intercession of a Gaga or Page. This slave needed freedom beyond ‘to thine own self be true.’

One’s true nature is bound up in another: the person of Jesus Christ. Christians know this with childlike profundity. Rather than rail at other’s addictive symptoms, they accompany wanderers unto Himself, the only unchanging mirror of the true self. Jesus, at once Creator and Redeemer, has gentle authority to summon who we are from a host of weak options, including LGBT fragmentation.

Then comes the good hard work of becoming chaste, which is all about harnessing desire in a way that dignifies everyone. No stranger to sensational enslavement, St. Augustine says it like this: ‘Through chastity, we are gathered together and led back to the unity from which we were fragmented into multiplicity’(CCC #2340).

What a guy. He gave language to our divided hearts which will flail about in vain for a center until we find ourselves in Jesus. Gaga knows something about this in her stated regret over partnering with abuser/rapper R. Kelly. This gifted woman now aspires to dignity, even to Christian faith. Why cannot she allow others to pursue theirs without demonizing them? She might just benefit from knowing how Jesus takes slaves of LGBT freedom and makes us fruitful sons and daughters.

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