

FREEDOM It Gained in '77, Report Declares

By RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

New York — Led by Spain and India, political and civil freedoms were gained by one billion in 1977 over the year before, according to a report by Freedom House.

The nonpartisan, non-profit organization, which keeps tabs on freedom around the world, reported that for the first time in five years freedom gained outpaced freedom lost.

Yet only 35 per cent of the world's countries are what Freedom House considers as free.

It reported gains in 26 nations and loss of personal freedom in nine countries with 123.8 million people.

"Despite strides made this year," said John Richardson Jr., president of Freedom House, "two thirds of all people still suffer political repression, cannot expect relief from the courts, and are denied free speech and access to free news media."

Press freedom faced growing threats, especially from the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, warned Leonard R. Sussman, Freedom House's executive director.

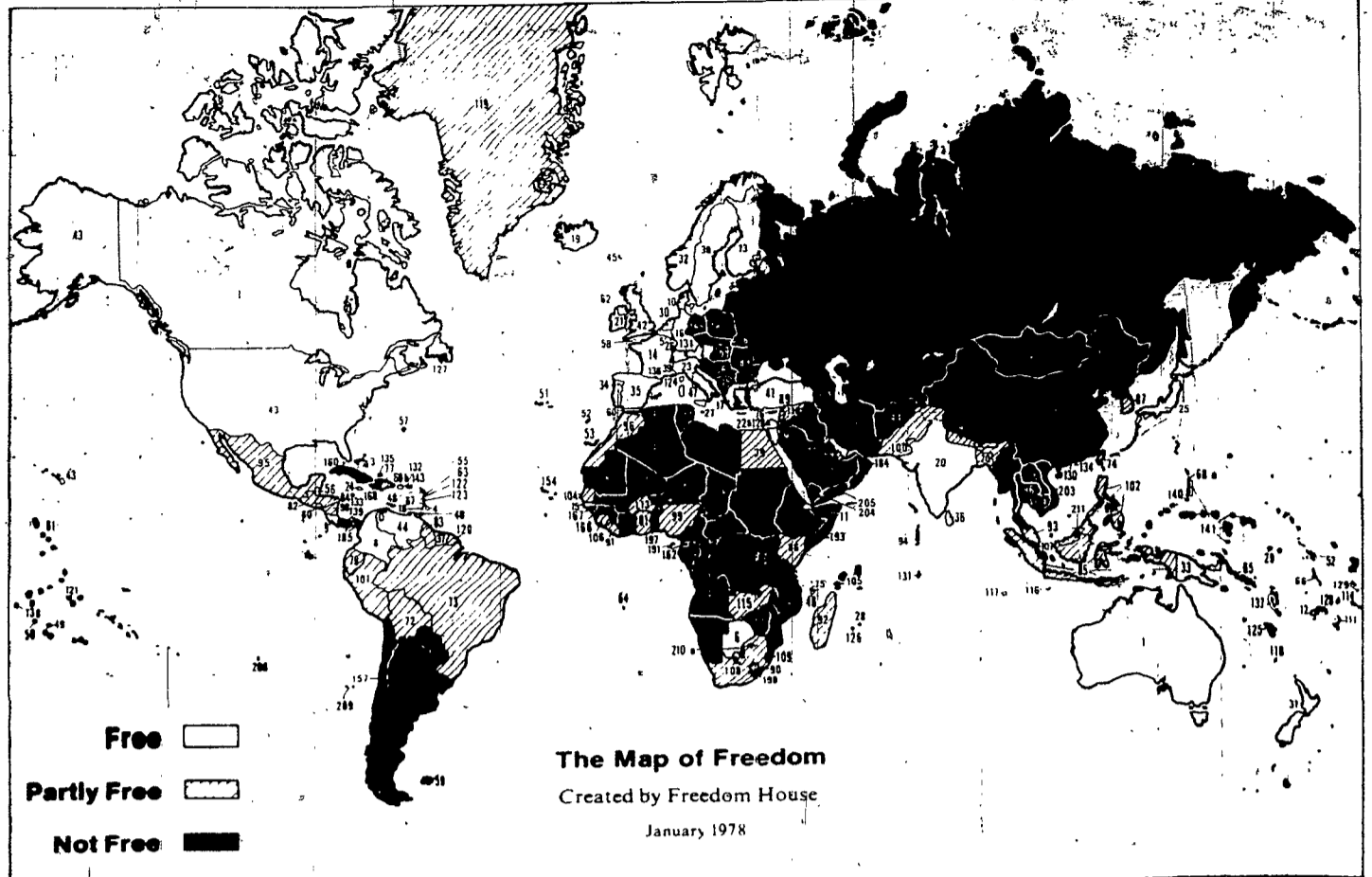
"UNESCO continues to push for approval in 1978 of a declaration favoring governmental regulation of the news media," Freedom House said. "The draft which sharply divided UNESCO delegates in 1976 has been partly modified. The new version is described by Freedom House as 'no more acceptable' to free-press adherents."

Freedom of the news media from political, economic or other controls or harassment, and the right of citizens to participate in the choice of political leaders, parties and government policies, are among the 24 criteria used in the survey to assess all nations and independent territories.

Freedom House said its 1977 survey was used by the U.S. State Department in reporting to Congress the level of human rights in each of 82 countries receiving U.S. security assistance.

Regional specialists provided these analyses of 1977:

"Asia: Restoration of democracy in India was the single most significant worldwide event affecting freedom in 1977. Perhaps the worst human rights disaster area was Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea (formerly Cambodia). Some 1.2 million persons may



have been killed in Kampuchea since 1975, according to the estimates of journalists and scholars. Some 200,000 persons remain in the "reeducation camps" of Vietnam. Some 100,000 "boat people" refugees from Indochina, have created a worldwide human rights issue.

"Middle East: International tensions, domestic political unrest, and deteriorating economic conditions provided excuses for several Middle Eastern countries to restrict political liberties still further."

"Europe: Human rights diminished in the Soviet Union, Romania, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, and improved in Poland, Yugoslavia. In Western Europe, the situation improved in Spain and remained little changed elsewhere. The West German campaign against murderous terrorism did not significantly worsen the human rights of West Germans."

"Africa: Prospects for independence improved in Rhodesia and Namibia. Djibouti achieved in-

dependence and Nigeria continued to move toward civilian rule. In South Africa there was greater repression of blacks and intimidation of white sympathizers."

"Latin America: Relatively little progress was made to expand democracy or develop a greater regard for civil rights. Panama, where the canal treaties await U.S. approval, relaxed restrictions on the press and the citizenry."

"United States: New and untested political leadership in the White House and Congress "faced fundamental policy dilemmas that had been too long postponed," said Freedom House. The most difficult aspect of the nation's "unfinished business," the organization added, is the moral and Constitutional question of insuring equal access to social and economic opportunities by all citizens, especially those disadvantaged by injustices in previous generations."

Opinion

Engaged Encounter

Editor:

Following is intended for all couples planning marriage.

Engaged Encounter has two weekends scheduled in the near future — Feb. 3-5 and March 31-April 2. Other weekends will take place in June, August, October and December. Take note that the weekend may be substituted for Pre-Cana — that additional Pre-Cana is NOT required.

We take this opportunity because it is that time of the year again — the BBF Bridal

Fair. The strains of "This is the morning of your lives — forever starts today" ... mingle with the snow reports. To be in the BBF Bridal Fair requires a large financial outlay which naturally limits it to those expecting to make a profit from those people planning weddings.

Most of us realize that the most beautiful, technically perfect wedding in the world cannot guarantee happiness ever after. Still, a couple's wedding day comes only once and it ought to be as special and wonderful as possible. Is spending money enough to insure this, or does a memorable wedding have something to do with a couple's commitment? There's nothing wrong with getting a beautiful start, but it's each and every day that follows the wedding that is the marriage.

Many couples plan for the wedding but expect the marriage to take care of itself. A significant number of couples, however, are giving their marriage as much priority as the wedding day. These couples are attending marriage preparation programs such as Pre-Cana and Engaged Encounter, not because the priest says they have to, but because they want their marriage to be the best. Engaged Encounter is a weekend program that offers the couple a respite from the bustle of wedding planning and allows them to focus on each other and their marriage. You won't hear about Engaged Encounter at the Bridal Fair because it does not make a profit. But if you want the best possible preparation for marriage ask us about

Engaged Encounter. For details: Mrs. Diehl, 254-8582 or Mrs. Patti 342-2279.

Jerry and Terry Patti
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Preach The Rosary

Editor:

I may be oversimplifying, but it seems to me that instead of looking around for new gimmicks to get the message of Christ's love across to the world, the Church should simply preach the rosary.

St. Louis De Montfort, in his booklet "The Secret of the Rosary" lists these benefits as the result of devotion to the rosary.

1. Sinners are forgiven.
 2. Souls that thirst are refreshed.
 3. Those who are fettered have their bonds broken.
 4. Those who weep find happiness.
 5. Those who are tempted find peace.
 6. The poor find help.
 7. Religious are reformed.
 8. Those who are ignorant are instructed.
 9. The living learn to overcome pride.
 10. The dead (the Holy Souls) have their pains eased by suffrages.
- Also:

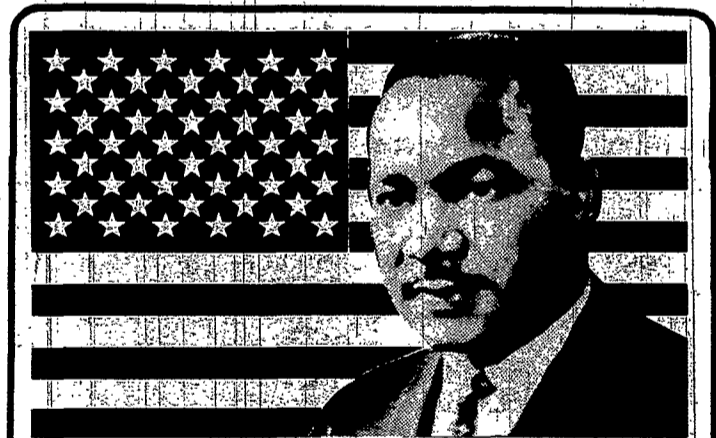
1. It gradually gives us a perfect knowledge of Jesus Christ.
 2. It purifies our souls, washing away sin.
 3. It gives us victory over all our enemies.
 4. It makes it easy for us to practice virtue.
 5. IT SETS US ON FIRE WITH LOVE FOR OUR BLESSED LORD!
 6. It enriches us with graces and merits.
 7. It supplies us with what is needed to pay all our debts to God and our fellow man and finally it obtains all kinds of graces for us from Almighty God.
- Why then is the Most Holy Rosary so neglected these days? Simply because it is not preached.

Granted it takes a great deal of simple childlike faith to take all these wonders of the Rosary on trust — but then, isn't that the name of the game?

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They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced, with names and addresses. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.



The Dreamer

Ten years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was martyred in Memphis, Tenn.

A proponent of non-violent, creative paths to racial justice, Martin Luther King never lived to see the end of racism in his country. And so far, neither have we.

Martin Luther King "had a dream" — a hopeful prophecy that someday his people would be "free at last." So far, we have not seen the fulfillment of even that simple dream.

Racism still survives as one of our nation's greatest problems and as long as it does, none of us, white, black, red, yellow or in-between, is free.

As we note Dr. King's birthday Jan. 15 and near the 10th anniversary of his murder, may all of us who have learned how to pray, from children to elders, kneel down and ask the good Lord, in respect to this great man, that He set all of His people in this world free. Free at last. Free finally.

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