

EXPERIENCING FREEDOM

We all talk about freedom. But what is freedom and what is its origin? What does it have to do with human fulfillment, authority, and power?

A great deal of uncertainty surrounds these questions. As a result, we find ourselves progressively replacing personal risk and responsibility with rules, policies, and risk management directives. It is as if we were afraid of experiencing too much freedom, and thus willing to trade it for one of its many palliatives.

We are approaching what T.S. Eliot predicted in his "Choruses from the Rock"-- a society that "constantly tries to escape from the darkness outside and within by dreaming of systems so perfect that no one will need to be good" or, in our case, free.

But what if freedom were not something to be regulated but plumbed to its depths?

In the land of freedom, in the city that greets the world with the Statue of Liberty, New York Encounter invites you to a weekend of public discussions, exhibits, presentations, and live performances exploring the topic of freedom. Our hope is that through its festivities, people, and life, New York Encounter itself may be, for all who participate, an experience of freedom.

PROGRAM

FRIDAY, JANUARY 18

6:45pm

"FREEDOM IS THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT THAT HEAVEN HAS BESTOWED UPON MEN" (Miguel De Cervantes).

Opening remarks by Msgr. Lorenzo Albacete, theologian, accompanied by witnesses and a poetry reading by Tony Hendra, writer and author

Msgr. Albacete will open the 2013 New York Encounter edition with an initial exploration of the nature of freedom not through an abstract analysis but through real-life witnesses.

"We often think of freedom as the absence of bonds or the possibility to do our own things or what we like. But this is not what freedom is. Even experientially or psychologically we feel truly free not when we do what we like best but, more keenly, when we feel satisfied, when something satisfies us. ... What is it, then, that can satisfy us? What can the soul be satisfied with? It's relationship with the infinite!" (Fr. Luigi Giussani, *The Risk of Education*).

9:00pm

AMERICA'S LONGING FOR FREEDOM

The Manhattan Wind Ensemble, directed by Christopher Baum, will perform *The Unanswered Question* by Charles Ives and other American masterpieces, accompanied by images and commentaries by Jonathan Fields, musician

The live performance of *The Unanswered Question*, a work by American composer Charles Ives which has been rarely heard in New York, will constitute the centerpiece of the night. Aaron Copland, who conducted this composition quite often, considered it to be "among the finest works ever created by an American artist." By that work of 1906, Ives was over half a century ahead of his time, writing in collage-like planes of contrasting styles.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19

11:00am

FREEDOM IN G.K.CHESTERTON

A conversation and staged reading with Fr. Ian Boyd, President of the G.K. Chesterton Institute for Faith and Culture

“The free man owns himself. He can damage himself with either eating or drinking; he can ruin himself with gambling. If he does he is certainly a damn fool, and he might possibly be a damned soul; but *if he may not, he is not a free man any more than a dog.*” – Broadcast talk, June 11, 1935. “Most modern freedom is at root fear. It is not so much that we are too bold to endure rules; it is rather that we are too timid to endure responsibilities.” – *What's Wrong With the World.* “The man of the true religious tradition understands two things: liberty and obedience. The first means knowing what you really want. The second means knowing what you really trust.” – *G.K.'s Weekly*, August 18, 1928

2:00pm

FREEDOM, RISK, RESPONSIBILITY: WHAT LIES BEHIND A CORPORATE SUCCESS STORY

Face to Face with Harold Korell, Chairman of the Board of Southwestern Energy

The business and corporate worlds have become dominated by policies. Has the increasing proliferation of regulations and risk-management directives displaced personal responsibility and risk, which are always implied in free human relationships? How can employers and employees be truly free in the current business environment? The trajectory of Mr. Korell's business story, his courage to bet on his own desires, and his willingness to face concrete challenges, is a striking example of how the human element is ultimately more important than any kind of “policies” or rule. It also demonstrates that his way of approaching work values the role of human freedom. He will share through a public conversation the role that freedom plays in his work and life.

3:30pm

LIBERTY IN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

A presentation by Francis Greene, art historian

This presentation will explore ways in which artists and their art have always sought to break free from constraints upon liberty, be they social, political, or other. Particular attention will be given to modern and contemporary artists and their quest to establish and maintain freedom. This pursuit of liberty reveals itself in the content of their artwork, but also in continuous stylistic innovation. But is there a larger point to this unending search for and celebration of freedom? The conclusions of this over-view will reveal deeper issues and meaning than a mere pursuit of innovation or novelty. Beyond it all lies man's fundamental orientation towards and search for Beauty.

5:00pm

FREEDOM IN POLITICS: THE STORY OF SHAHBAZ BHATTI

A eyewitness account of the life and death of the murdered Pakistani Minister for Minority Affairs by his brother Paul Bhatti, Pakistan's Minister for National Harmony

From November 2008 until his assassination in Islamabad on March 2, 2011, Shahbaz Bhatti served as the first Federal Minister for Minority Affairs in Pakistan. Mr. Bhatti, a Roman Catholic and outspoken critic of Pakistan's blasphemy laws was gunned down by Tehrik-i-Taliban for refusing to relent on his fight for the freedom of Christians and other minorities in Pakistan. After Shahbaz's death, his brother Paul courageously stepped forward in his stead and now serves as Pakistan's Minister for National Harmony. Minister Bhatti will share poignant stories from his and his brother's lives: what freedom meant to them, how they remained faithful to it in the midst of all the challenges implied in politics, and how they defended and promoted freedom at the individual and social level.

9:00pm

THE KATRINA LETTERS

Ensemble piece for actors and singers with music ranging from Schubert to Tango to Broadway, created and directed by Christopher Vath, musician.

In the cleanup of Hurricane Katrina, a New Orleans family discovered 500 letters exchanged by their parents at the time of their courtship during World War II.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 20

9:45am

MARIA YUDINA: THE PIANIST WHO MOVED STALIN

A documentary on the life of the Russian pianist

One of the people of modern times whose heart was radiantly pure was Maria Yudina, the greatest Russian pianist of the last century. She lived through the Russian revolution and its aftermath, seeing many of her dearest friends and colleagues disappear into the Gulag. She was a fearless Christian at a time when the price of a display of religious faith could be one's work, one's freedom, even one's life. She not only performed piano works but paused during concerts to read the poetry of such writers as Boris Pasternak, who were unable to publish at the time. Her friend, the composer Dmitry Shostakovich remembered: "In a time of heart-stopping fear, here was someone as fearless as Saint George before the dragon, someone who preferred giving away her few rubles to repairing her own broken window, who "published" with her own voice the poems of banned writers, who dared to tell Stalin that he was not beyond God's mercy and forgiveness. She had a large and pure heart. No wonder her grave in Moscow has been a place of pilgrimage ever since her death." It is said that Yudina's recording of the Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 23*, was on the record player when Stalin was found dead in his dacha. It was the last thing he had listened to.

11:00am

HOLY MASS

Celebrated by His Eminence Card. Edward Egan, Archbishop Emeritus of New York, with the Communion and Liberation Choir

2:00pm

FAITH, SOUL OF LIFE

A reflection on Christian experience in light of Benedict XVI's writings for the Year of Faith, with Fr. Peter Cameron, O.P., Editor-in-chief of *Magnificat*, and Fr. Julián Carrón, President of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation Movement.

The "Year of Faith" has been declared by Pope Benedict XVI, following his desire to give "new impetus to the mission of the whole Church to lead men out of the desert in which they often find themselves, to the place of life, of friendship with Christ." To mark the beginning of it, the Synod of the Bishops took place in Rome in October 2012 and was dedicated to "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith". Fr. Carron participated to it as Synodal Fathers appointed by the Pope. Recounting his experience, he wrote: "The starting point was the conviction, evident to all today, that faith is no longer an obvious presupposition. This situation not only regards faith as a personal experience, but it also has consequences for the life of nations, for whom fertile land can become an inhospitable desert. Perhaps the most significant sign of this desertification is the inability to discern a point from which to start again, even on the part of the keenest observers, who are always ready to point out what is lacking, but are powerless when it comes to offering suggestions for how to begin anew. ... From where do we start again, then?" Fr. Carron and Fr. Cameron will address this fundamental question in light of the Pope's writings for the Year of Faith.

4:00pm

LAW AND FREEDOM PUT TO THE TEST OF EXPERIENCE

A discussion on how law helps to realize, or suppress, freedom in the age of human rights proliferation, with Michael Hanby, Professor of Biotechnology and Culture, Pontifical John Paul II Institute, John McCarthy, Dean of the School of Philosophy, Catholic University of America; and Lisa Schiltz, Professor of Law, Thomas J. Abood Research Scholar and Co-Director of the Terrence J. Murphy Institute for Catholic Thought, Law and Public Policy, University of Saint Thomas

What is the relationship between law, rights, and freedom? When is freedom realized by law? When is it, instead, suffocated or suppressed? The speakers will address these questions in light of the irreducible need for justice and freedom as they emerge in human experience. Does human experience reveal an objective yet inherently personal criteria that enables the individual (regardless of any social, cultural or religious background) to judge both the fairness of a rule and its ability to realize greater freedom? The discussion will relate to a recently published book titled "Elementary Experience and Law" in which four legal scholars apply an innovative take on the concept of "elementary experience" – which is at the basis of Msgr. Luigi Giussani's fundamental work "The Religious Sense" – to the legal system and the issue of justice.

6:00pm

DESIRE, LIBERTY, AND SATISFACTION

A witness by John Waters, *Irish Times* columnist, on his life's journey, with remarks by Maurizio Maniscalco, President of New York Encounter

Following are excerpts from a column that John Waters wrote on the *Irish Times* on July 6, 2012.

“At the heart of both the capitalist system and the libertarianism which nowadays underlies most conventional notions of social progress lies a misunderstanding of human freedom. With the capitalist the misunderstanding is self-interestedly deliberate; with the 1960s revolutionary it is hypocritical. The 1960s placed at the centre of western culture the idea that the shortest path to satisfaction was along a straight line between instinctual desire and its intuited target. Freedom was the enjoyment of what came naturally and the handbook suggested that this came without consequences once you shook off the guilt imposed by grey-bearded naysayers from whose grasp society and its instruments had been snatched. They missed that these apparently imposed rules and strictures were the encoded wisdom of human trial and error through the ages. The “rules” emanated from within the human person, defining both the limits of human searching for satisfaction and proposing safeguards against potential encroachment on or from others. The post-1960s generations have not been honest about their experience of freedom. Privately – individually – many have found their pursuit of freedom did not deliver the satisfactions they craved but they have invested too much of themselves in the project to admit this.

But the crux of the matter is not greed, selfishness or decadence. The common denominator is a cultural phenomenon of desire misunderstood – a failure to understand that human longing cannot be met by any of the obvious things it fixes upon. This problem cannot be addressed by more rules or the renewal of morals but only by a reopening of the question: what does mankind actually want?”

9:00pm

PURE AFRO-CUBAN JUICE

A night dedicated to the traditions of big band Latin Jazz with the 18-piece Latin-Afro Jazz Orchestra led by Arturo O’Farill

The A Latin-Afro Jazz Orchestra led by Arturo O’Farill, pianist, composer, and educator, will bring its Latin rhythms, clave, African-base percussions, as well as modern jazz and swing to the Hemmerstein Ballroom as the closing event of the 2013 New York Encounter.

EXHIBITS:

G. K. CHESTERTON AND FREEDOM

This exhibit gives a biographical outlook of the larger-than-life British author, and offers a synopsis of his art and works, highlighting his views on freedom.

“¡VIVA CRISTO REY!” - CRISTEROS: THE MARTYRS OF MEXICO (1926-1929)

This exhibit documents the persecution and martyrdom of many men, women, and children who, facing a hostile power in Mexico, gave their lives to defend the public presence of the Church in society. Among them was Fr. Miguel Augustin Pro, who was sentenced and executed without a trial in 1927, and proclaimed saint by the Blessed John Paul II in 1988.