

Sebastian Libuda
Holy Cross High School
Flushing, NY

Project Hope “Importance of Religious Freedom”

Religious freedom is important all over the world, especially in the American society.
Father

Jacques-Francois Dujarie tried his best to preserve religious freedom during the French Revolution.

Almost all of France was Catholic. When the French Revolution broke out, Catholicism began declining. Priests faced arrest, deportation, and sometimes even death. Despite all of this

Fr. Jacques-Francois Dujarie tried his hardest to maintain religious freedom and Catholicism in France.

As an American, I can see how important religious freedom is. The American society is so

diverse in cultures that if we took away all of them and kept only one religion, there would be chaos.

My next door neighbor and the one across from me believe in different religions. What if they couldn't

practice their religion? Religious freedom is so important in today's time. The world is so diverse with

religions. As Americans, a lot of us don't look outside of the American society. But if we look towards

countries like Syria or Iraq, people don't really have an option to practice another religion than Muslim.

They face death in those Middle-Eastern countries. Religious freedom creates a society. It creates a

flowing and flourishing one. With religious freedom, there is less poverty and more prosperity. America

is a prospering country because of this. If you look at Syria, there is no religious freedom. Their government is corrupt because of this. This is the case with many countries. Religious freedom unites

families. It creates a family. Religious freedom creates the American Society. We are built and based

upon it. It prevents anyone from hurting us or forcing us to believe in a certain religion. It brings all of us

together. I think that the example of Fr. Jacques-Francois Dujarie is even more actual today. If we take

a look at Syria where thousands of Christians are killed by ISIS, we realize that his values are extremely

important today. Christians in Syria face terror, bombings and systematic killings every day. Their

churches are being destroyed, Christians are kidnapped, their homes and businesses are taken over by

ISIS. Christians are forced to abandon their homes and most importantly their faith. According to Fox

News, "Syria is the cradle of human civilization and the region where Christianity began 2,000 years

ago. Syria remains one of the few places where the language of Aramaic, the language of Jesus, can still

be heard." In 1920, Christians made up nearly a third of the Syrian population, now it's only five

percent of the population. Christian leaders and clerics have been constantly kidnapped and executed.

U.S. is a very powerful country and I think we have the responsibility to help those people. In my

opinion we should try to help them peacefully without using weapons. That is what Jesus Christ taught

us to do. The whole world is accepting refugees from Syria and trying to help them right now. Our Pope

Francis encourages us to do that.

Without religious freedom life would be very different from what we imagine it as being right

now. In the U.S. we have religious freedom but we should reach out and help others that don't have this

privilege. We should help speak up and stand up for those without these rights. We shouldn't fight or kill

people because of this. Our God or Allah would never want people killing each other to spread a religion. It is against all laws. As regular people, we can't really go into these countries and fight but

what we can do is speak up. Speaking up or even standing up for someone is as much if not more than fighting. A peaceful approach can achieve more than a hostile one.

What if you couldn't practice your religion? What if you were to be killed because of what you

practice? Would you still practice it? I know I wouldn't. I would be afraid. It takes great courage to do

this. Fr. Jacques-Francois Dujarie shows us this. He went out and worked secretly "underground" to

preserve Catholicism. I can see from what I hear on the news that life is so different elsewhere. People

get killed over what they believe. I would be scared. I would run and probably do nothing. It is tough to

fight over religious freedom. You could risk your life. Fr. Jacques-Francois Dujarie isn't telling us to go

out into these countries and fight. He is telling us to join clubs, go on missionaries, speak up at conventions, or even participate in your local Church. These are simple ways that can mean and do

a lot.

After reading about Father Jacques-Francois Dujarie, I realized how hard and important it was

to preserve religious freedom. Without religious freedom, I wouldn't be sitting here. Neither would most

of us. Father Jacques-Francois Dujarie gave us a great example to follow. Just from reading about him

we can learn how to help others that do not have religious freedom. I will now help and speak up for

religious freedom. I can now encourage everyone to do so. My family came from Poland and I heard a

lot of stories about Christians that were killed for their religion. They told me the story about a priest

Maximilian Kolbe who gave his life to save another man in deathcamp Auschwitz. He volunteered to die

to save another man who wanted to live to see his wife and children. That was the true example of a

Christian's behavior. He gave his life to save somebody else like Jesus Christ did to save us. Maximilian

Kolbe was canonized as Martyr by Pope John Paul II. Maximilian Kolbe followed

Fr. Jacques-Francois Dujarie also and both of them give us great examples to follow. We are Christians

and we should show the world the peace and love like Jesus Christ showed us. Remember, religious

freedom is a great privilege and many people don't have it. As an American society and great nation we

should go out and help to spread this idea. Father Jacques-Francois Dujarie gives us a legacy to follow

and we should. He gave us an example of how to spread the religions peacefully without killing innocent

people, women and children. War is a terrible thing and we should do everything in our power to avoid it.