

Freedom in Hollywood movies and real life

I was talking with Father Matt Buening, pastor of St. Paul's in Ellicott City, this morning about movies. He asked me what I thought about Pixar's new movie, Brave, which we've both seen. Yes, two guys in their 30s spent part of their morning talking about a Pixar animated movie.

What struck him about the movie was the idea of freedom and how the main character, Marida, just wants it and never particularly earns it. And she never really learns that freedom comes with a cost. On this Independence Day in America, it's worth remembering that freedom does come with a cost.

In Hollywood movies, freedom is at the core of some of the greatest movies ever. While the Star Wars saga tracks the fall and redemption of Anakin Skywalker, it's also about how tenuous freedoms are. The prequels show how fear can lead us to give up freedoms and hand over authority to power hungry individuals.

The original trilogy shows us that love and sacrifice are the paths to freedom and redemption. Obi-Wan Kenobi takes one look at Luke Skywalker in the original Star Wars and smiles before sacrificing himself to Darth Vader's lightsaber and for a greater cause.

Look over Lord of the Rings and the characters who make the choice at the right

moment (Boromir, King Theoden, Galdalf), Harry Potter (Harry and seemingly all his friends), the recent Batman movies and Braveheart. For those of us who love cheese-fests, even Independence Day features Randy Quaid flying a jet into an alien ship, knowing it could be a turning point for earth.

At the heart of those movies is sacrifice for others. Freedom comes with a cost. I'm not saying we should all run around laying our lives on the line, but we should be aware that someone else did that for us. We have to fight for them.

As Christians, we believe that Jesus died for our sins. What a gift. It's a freedom we have to earn each day and it's one of the hardest things to accomplish. Like the most recent Pixar movie's title, we have to be brave.

Happy Fourth of July.