

The book on virtues as the dress of freedom wants to re-focus on the delicate theme of Christian life as a theological life and of freedom as the fruit of full respect for this new nature that Christ brought among us through his Holy Spirit and of the Church. The key to the reading of each page of this book is the Presentation of Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno, which in a few pages provides the theological core of the theological life: all the virtues start from the Word of God and all live on the Word of God. Faith is a Word that is believed, charity is a lived Word (according to one's ministry, charisma and gift: ministerial charity), hope is the Word awaited in its fulfilment of eternal beatitude if the Word of the Gospel will be believed and lived.

The whole book has as its central core and theme the Johannine assumption that "then, Jesus said to those Jews who had believed him: "If you remain in my word, you are indeed my disciples; you will know the truth and the truth will make you free"" (Jn 8: 31-32). The first chapter examines three authors of the Catholic theological tradition on the theme of freedom: Irenaeus of Lyon, Augustine of Hippo and Thomas of Aquinas. On the theme of freedom they provide with a theological vision from which contemporary people have progressively moved away. For these authors, freedom is the achievement of a goal that can be pursued only through the redemption brought about by Christ. While for the contemporary world it is a sign of total emancipation from God and from his Word and the absence of any truthful bond. Man is endowed with a will so

that he can go to God by choice: freedom is to support the natural motion of the will.

The second part of the book deals with the theological virtues given through grace by Christ and only by Him, and manifested immediately as the only possible garment of freedom. Only being clothed with them, we can consider ourselves truly free, of that freedom that Christ came to give us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. From his living presence in the Christian the theological life is born, grows and develops up to its perfection. In a constant journey in the truth made known by revelation and therefore by the Word of Christ, the theological life produced by the action and motion of the Spirit, drawn from the body of Christ which is the Church, becomes the "place" where the liberating power of grace is realized and manifested.

The theological virtues of faith, charity and hope are re-proposed in an essential link with the Word of Christ, revealed, published and transmitted by the Church, actualized in the Magisterium, vivified and personalized by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we speak of faith only if there is in fact a listening and an immediate obedience, not to a word, but to the whole Word revealed and understood in the actual light of the Holy Spirit. To the revelation, and therefore to the Word, the virtue of charity is also connected, since in the supernatural vision of charity the content of love, its forms, its recipients and its modalities are dictated by the Word and not by the heart of man. Finally, also hope is not an expectation that the desires of the heart are fulfilled, but that those promises that the Lord addresses to those who live by authentic and very pure faith are realized. The anchoring of the theological virtues to the Word is the peculiarity of this work.

The basic idea that runs through the whole book from beginning to end is that, in order to talk about freedom, it is necessary to have the Crucified Christ with his redemptive work, the action of the Spirit with his sanctifying work, the perennial immersion in the will and in the charity of the Father, from whom everything begins and the incorporation into the Body of Christ as a "theological place" of the true humanization of man through his Christification.

Of course, Lord, you know that I love you

Simon Peter denied Jesus three times. Might one, who before a danger swears that he does not know the Christ of God, be the guide of the whole flock of the Lord? One who claims he does not to know who He is? The Church is made up of men on the way to holiness, she is not made up of most holy people as Jesus is most Holy. At the first difficulty, many could have also failed to recognize Peter's authority, rebelling against his teaching and his doctrine. After his glorious resurrection, Jesus sets the conditions so that no quarrel or dispute ever arises. Three times he asks Peter to confess his love. Three times Peter manifests his heart. Three times the Lord gives him the mandate to feed sheep and lambs. Thus the before of Peter is declared closed forever. It is closed not by decisions of men, but by the will of Christ Jesus. What Jesus closes must be considered closed for eternity.

Whoever leads the flock of Christ Jesus, who is placed high in the responsibility of service, must pay close attention not to fall into sin, into the transgression of the commandments and into disobedience to the Law of the Lord. Much vigilance must also be given to the smallest sins and venialities. To the visibility we must add credibility and if the latter fails, there is spiritual detachment, removal and separation. Many schisms in the Church take place precisely because of the little exemplary life of those who are invested in the very high office for the care of the flock. Yesterday the separation took place by turning physically away

from the Church. Today the separation takes place by detachment of the heart, mind, soul and spirit. One remains Church, but walks on his own. He approaches the Church when there is a matter of living of empty religiosity, because rituality is celebrated without the soul or heart. Since the Lord instituted the ministry of priestly mediation, the flock thrives for the minister and the flock deteriorates and dies for him.

If a disciple of Jesus lacks credibility, he is no longer an instrument of aggregation to the flock and to its growth. Credibility for a disciple of Jesus is everything. If we are not credible it is the sign that Jesus has withdrawn from us or does not live fully in us. Whoever saw Jesus saw the Father. Whoever sees a Christian must see Christ. Even if two thousand people do not believe in him, there will always be someone who will believe and be led to his Saviour, Redeemer, Master and Pastor. Where to start to add credibility to credibility, from? From the observance of the smallest precepts of the Law. We start from the conformation of our life to that of Christ the Lord. Today, we love visibility, we care for it with art and science. We also go against the Gospel to be visible. Nothing is done to be credible. Instead taking care of one's credibility is the source of life for the whole flock of the Lord. Mother of God, ensure that every child of yours is made credible for his conformation to the truth and charity of Jesus.

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"BUT IT WAS NECESSARY TO CELEBRATE AND REJOICE..."

Reflections starting from the Homily of H.H. Francis
on the occasion of the apostolic trip to Morocco (03.31.2019)

"On the threshold of that house appear the divisions and clashes, the aggressiveness and conflicts that will always strike the doors of our great desires, of our struggles for fraternity and so that every person can already immediately experience his condition and dignity as a son" (Homily).

The parable of the merciful Father is one of the most wonderful and astonishing revelations of the Kingdom of God that our Lord Jesus Christ has given us. It contains not only the values of love, which is opposed to hatred, of unity, which is opposed to division, of repentance, which is opposed to the condition of sin, but it also contains the value of the family.

Today's world is perfectly represented in this parable. There is a Father who loves his children immensely and desires their good and there are his two sons, who decide to make their own choices and take their own paths. Having experienced the filth caused by sin, the younger son returns to the Father, thinking he is no longer worthy of his love, but ignores that the only compensation the Father desires to receive is his salvation, knowing that his beloved son he is well and that his example as the Father has helped his life. Although a moment of joy and celebration has been created, the eldest son despises what happened; he denies his brother, considering him not worthy of forgiveness. The parable is clear: the world lives and is fed by discord, jealousy, disorder and hatred, leading men to deny each other, as men, as brothers and as children of the heavenly Father.

But, in this homily, Pope Francis underlines the love the Father has for his children: "On the threshold of that house the desire of the Father will shine forth with all clarity, without speculations or excuses that diminish its worth, that all his children take part in his joy; that no one lives in non-human conditions like his youngest son, nor in an orphan state, isolation and bitterness like his eldest son. His heart wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4)". Therefore, even if divisions and chaos reign in the life of man today, there is always the opportunity to return, to revitalize the personal condition as a child. From this we can deduce that, if one in his heart truly wishes to rekindle this dormant faith because of sin, it is necessary to take up the Word of God (by now abandoned and disavowed), live it, make it the foundation of his life first in order then to give it, allowing others to experience this immense joy, as the Father invited the eldest son to attend the party of the newfound brother. Not surprisingly, St. Paul reminds us that the Gospel "is the power of God for the salvation of whoever believes, of the Jew first and then of the Greek. It is in this that God's righteousness from faith to faith is revealed, as it is written: The just shall live by faith" (Rom 1: 16-17).

In the light of this parable, let us ask the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, to intercede for us and our brothers, so that our life is never separated from that love that might never decide not to love.

Deacon Saverio Menniti

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

SIMON, SON OF JOHN,
DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN THESE?
(III EASTER SUNDAY - Year C)

WE MUST OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN (Acts 5,27-32.40-41)

In the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem, the Apostles declare publicly that it is necessary to obey God instead of men. It is right then to ask: when is it right not to obey the men of God to obey God? Who can appeal to God not to obey the men of God? Every man can appeal to God, but every man who appeals to God must also live the law of God. He who appeals to Christ must live the law of Christ. Jesus always appealed to his Father, but always living his appeal not only in the great truth, but also in the very great charity. One can appeal to God, on condition that he is able to always remain in the greatest good, without ever knowing evil. Jesus appealed to his truth and through it he went to meet the crucifixion, always remaining in the highest charity. The appeal to God is the will to assume all the consequences, but remaining in charity.

TO THE ONE WHO SITS ON THE THRONE AND TO THE LAMB (Rev 5,11-14)
Jesus always said that he and the Father are one. The Apostle John reveals to us that not only Jesus and the Father are one, he also tells us that the Father governs history by placing it all in the hands of his Son. In fact it is the Son the one who receives the book with the seven seals and it is He who from time to time opens the seals so that what is written in them is fulfilled. If the Son does not open the seal neither does the Father open it. If the Son opens it, the Father opens it. Jesus is really the Only, universal Mediator between the Father and humanity, indeed between the Father and creation. To the Father and to the Son who is the Immo-

lated Lamb, Angels and men offer the same cult, the same glory and the same adoration without any difference. The Father is the glory of the Son and the Son is the glory of the Father. The Father lives everything for the Son and the Son lives everything for the Father. The disciple of Jesus must also be inserted in this communion of love. He must live for Christ.

YOU KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU
(Jn 21,1-19)

Simon Peter is conscious of not loving his Master as he is loved by his Master. This is why he does not respond to the Lord by telling him that he loves him. Instead he shows his great good to him. This does not mean that he will have to stop at the good, he too will have to reach great love, indeed his love will have to be in all equal to that of his Master. For this reason the dialogue ends with an explicit invitation to follow the Master until his death. What then is the life of the disciple of Jesus? It is a following to achieve the beauty and perfection of the Master's love. Beauty and perfection that are achieved in the total gift of life, entirely consecrated for the edification of the kingdom of God in the heart of every man. A disciple who does not build the kingdom can make prayers, but he does not love. He can celebrate sacraments, but he does not love. He can do works of charity, but he does not love. He loves according to Christ, who loves Christ. He loves Christ who builds his kingdom among men. The building of the Kingdom of God is the only charity, the only love that Jesus asks. He loves him, who builds his kingdom.

by the theologian,
Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno