

# Reflections

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## Exterior Slavery and no to the apostolate

An area which has a strong influence on our inner freedom is the pressure we have from others. For example: pressures from persons who are close to us and “who only want the best for us.” With this aim, we are invaded.

Often we permit it because we feel insecure or we do not know what to do. Sometimes we look at others out of the corner of our eye to see how they do it, to see how the majority does it. Sometimes we just want others to look at us with benevolence so that we are not criticized.

However, I am who I am. I have to live my own life with my own style and rhythm, with my limits and my originality. My priorities determine my decisions. Others cannot decide for me with their requests, suggestions, and pressures.

It is true that I have to remain sensitive to the needs of others, but they cannot overwhelm my inner freedom and obligate me to do something which I do not wish to do. Here, tenderness and firmness have to come together.

Another danger is the means of communication which wants to pressure and manipulate us. The result is that these means very often think for us, decide for us, and plan the future for us. Perhaps we allow them to dominate everything. In this way, slowly, we become slaves of public opinion, or as Father would say....we become mass-men. We begin to lose the ability to take our own position in regard to what we hear, see or read.

A fruit of this mentality is what Father calls the man-movie or the man-television. He is the broken man who lives from sensation to sensation, from impression to impression, in full speed, without stopping, with no compass and with no meaning.

A typical symbol of this is *zapping*. Father Kantenich says that this man has lost his soul, that he is discontinuance personified, that he is perfect depersonalization. Here you have in a few words the illness and the cross of modern man: He is a man who lives from and depends on superficial sensations.

There also is the model, the central idea around which post-modern society revolves. The “love magazines” are the transmitters: for example, the ‘lite’ woman dresses like the characters she sees in the magazines. She also imitates their style of life which is empty and broken. All of this results in frivolity and superficiality.

We have to be more critical when facing modern society and when facing the opposing values it propagates. We also have to try to make a serene synthesis of all the news and impressions which bombard us.

Another important topic for us is that of occupations, commitments, and apostolic tasks. Many of us are people who are very occupied and people who are occupied are people who are important. Nevertheless, it may simply mean that we are addicted to work. Perhaps we have a great deal of Martha and very little of Mary. In spite of that, perhaps we cannot fulfill everything. So, what can we do?

First of all, we would have to be clear about our personal priorities. This is especially helpful when one is overwhelmed.

Secondly: could it be that we do not know how to say “no” when something is asked of us? Also in the apostolate: to say “no” to the apostolate is as important as saying “yes” to the apostolate. Thus I can dedicate myself to that apostolate for which I am inclined or have charisma. When a task is proposed, it is best not to accept it immediately. It is better to ask for time to think about it or to discuss it with my spouse.

## Questions for reflection

1. Do I quote as absolute truth what they say in the media?
2. Am I influenced by clothing and style?
3. Is it hard for me to say “no,” or do I say “yes” but do not comply?

If you wish to comment on this text or give a testimony, write to: [pn.reflexiones@gmail.com](mailto:pn.reflexiones@gmail.com)

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