

Reflections

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Free

The aim of the Christian is to go toward sanctity more resolutely, bravely and without excuses. We should all strive toward the highest degree possible of sanctity. Nevertheless, I believe that many of us are still very far from this goal.

It is hard to renounce so many things.....habits, likes and comforts which have become obstacles on our going toward perfection. It is hard to give ourselves without reserve to the Virgin Mary and to God.

What seemed possible to fulfill in moments of religious sentiment and enthusiasm, now seems impossible in everyday life. But in spite of everything, we cannot and do not want to renounce these high ideals which God has placed in our hearts.

It seems to me that to advance more on this way, we have to make our own a fundamental attitude: the spirit of freedom.

If we do not live that spirit faithfully, if we do not cultivate it permanently, sooner or later, we are destined to fail in our striving. But if we live it, we are showing modern man the footprint which leads to sanctity, because contemporary man not only has an enormous desire for freedom.

Today's man has to also live amidst the world with a minimum of exterior attachments.

Our Father and Founder says that freedom is a primary instinct of human nature. And the reason for it is that man was made in the image and likeness of God. And God is the Being most free.

Freedom, therefore, is one of our greatest values, root of our dignity and personal greatness. It is like the nucleus of our personality.

We can use it for the good or for the bad. God's greatest risk is having given us freedom, the motive for so much evil in our world.

I believe we should have an immense respect before God's pedagogy. He knows how many millions of men abuse their freedom. And nevertheless, He allows it so that some of them may decide freely for Him. His joy are those human beings who use that gift well. Therefore, Father Kentenich, founder of the Schoenstatt Movement, can say that freedom in the fullest sense is perfect sanctity.

Freedom is the ability for decision and fulfillment.

What does Father Kentenich understand by freedom? Of course, it is not simply doing whatever one wants to do according to whims or personal fancy. Neither does it mean an absolute lack of attachments. What interests Father Kentenich is not exterior freedom, but inner freedom, the freedom of hearts. He usually gives, according to context or circumstances, descriptions or definitions of that inner freedom.

One of them says thus: *Freedom is the ability to decide freely and to freely fulfill what has been decided.*

Knowing how to decide for myself and fulfilling that decision against all obstacles is not easy in today's world. Because it means, often, swimming against the current, thinking differently from the others, acting against the norms of the majority.

It demands valor and independence, to have and to defend my own opinion before a mass-man society. It is not easy today to think and to act freely and autonomously. It is much more comfortable to go along with what the majority thinks, feels and does. Freedom is a sublime gift, but also an extraordinarily difficult task.

Question for reflection

Do I consider myself free from the opinions of others regarding my person?

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