



Some reflections inspired by online copyrighted commentaries and homilies

May 14, 2023

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Imagine a spouse or a friend saying to you, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Such a statement might cause you to react with surprise. Ordinarily, we do not see obedience to another as a sign that we love them. However, what if a parent were to say to a child, "If you love me, you will be obedient." That statement is easier to accept because of the unique role of a parent to their children.

In regard to our love of God, obedience to His divine will is the greatest act of love we can offer. This is because God's will be perfect. It's exactly what we need in life. It's what we were made for. And it is the one and only way to achieve the human fulfillment that we seek. Only God can say such a thing to us because only God is God. Jesus followed up His call to obedience by saying that obedience to Him will result in Jesus and His Father bestowing the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth upon you. The Holy Spirit will remain "with you and will be in you." This is such a profound statement from our Lord. In fact, so much of what He says within this sermon given at the Last Supper is profound beyond comprehension.

One clear thing this tells us is that obedience to God leads to a discovery of the Truth. And as Jesus says elsewhere, "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31–32). Obedience leads to Truth. Truth leads to freedom.

This begs the question: Do you want to be free? Clearly you do. We cannot not want to be free. Meaning, we are obliged to want freedom, just as we are obliged to want happiness. Why? Because the desire for freedom and happiness is written upon our very nature. It is a desire that we cannot escape. It's how we are wired. However, it is quite possible to become confused about the way we achieve these desires. For many, obedience is not always understood as the pathway to that desired freedom and happiness.

On a grand scale, this is what God does for us. He is the perfect Father who always knows what is best for us. For that reason, we must not only conform to His will, but we must also desire it, seek it out and desire to be obedient to the greatest degree. This is the path to Truth. It is the path to freedom. It is the path to the happiness we desire.

Reflect, today, upon your own level of obedience to the will of God and your understanding of the importance of that obedience. Do you realize that God's will is perfect? Perhaps you do intellectually, but how about practically? When you read through the Scriptures and hear Jesus' commands of love, do you seek to follow them without hesitation? For example, do you forgive those who seem undeserving? Can you say, with our Lord from the Cross, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do?" Reflect upon anything this past year that was difficult for you to embrace from God. Ponder it, pray over it and seek to obey whatever He has revealed to you. Doing so will be the first step toward the fulfillment of your deepest desires in life.

Reflection from: My Catholic Life