

Vocations Week Reflection

Gospel John 12:24-26

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies,
it remains just a grain of wheat;
but if it dies, it produces much fruit.

Whoever loves his life loses it,
and whoever hates his life in this world
will preserve it for eternal life.

Whoever serves me must follow me,
and where I am, there also will my servant be.
The Father will honor whoever serves me.”



Free -- For What?

Why in the world would I want to understand my life as a call from someone else? Wouldn't such an idea curtail my personal freedom? Wouldn't it get in the way of my career? Shouldn't I be able to decide from within what I want to do with my life? After all, I have only one life to live.

Well ... maybe the answer to those questions is not as simple as we might think. If that someone else is another human being, like a parent, teacher, coach, boss or even a good friend, then the answer is that we should never let anyone else make a critical decision about a life choice for us. Surprisingly, some people do. A parent wants his son or daughter to be a physician and so convinces him/her to apply to medical school. A friend has a connection with an up and coming business and informs us that this is definitely "the job for you." Family members pressure a young man or woman to marry that person they all like so much. When individuals give in to pressures like these, they lose their personal freedom and risk a life of unhappiness.

But what if that Someone Else is the One who created us and gave us the gift of our freedom? The God who created us with freedom and for freedom. The God who is closer to us than we are to ourselves, as Saint Augustine once put it. Then it may just be that we are most free when we are in touch with God's voice speaking deep within us. We are our best selves when we are in relationship with this living God who draws near to us. In the Christian life we discover that we become more free the more we come to depend on God and strive to carry out God's will in our lives. SO what goes here.

There is a great emphasis on personal freedom in our American society. And freedom is certainly a good thing. Our personal freedom is indeed a precious gift. But our use of freedom only becomes authentic when it is connected. We become truly free when we remain connected to the God who created us and redeemed us in Christ. In this relationship we discover that God speaks to us through our deepest desires. Our deepest yearnings, which lie beneath our more superficial cravings, link us to God's will in our lives. We need to listen within to those deepest desires in order to discover the voice of God. This God frees us by calling us to serve Him and His beloved people. Fr. Robin Ryan, CP

NOT ALL UP TO ME

* *St Teresa of Avilla, Spanish, 1513-1582*

O my Lord, what a great comfort it is to me
that you did not entrust the fulfilment
of your will to a person
as fragile as I am!

Blessed be God forever!
Let all things praise you!

If the fulfilment or the non fulfilment of your will
were entirely in my weak hands,
I would have to be perfect.

Nevertheless, although nothing in me
is yet totally free from self-interest,
I give all I have to your service,
freely and gladly.
Amen.



Prayer for Vocations

God of all creation,
through Baptism, you gift us with new life.
You call each of us to live that life in a unique way
so that we may truly become the witnesses of your love.

Bless all those you call:
all single and married people
all priests and deacons
all sisters and brothers.

May we all become builders of your kingdom
and sacraments of your love
as we live out the mission of Jesus Christ
through living our vocational call.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.