

«Behold, I make all things new »

(Revelation 21 :5)

Lent Retreat 2022

I AM FREE

Deuteronomy 30: 15 -20

This passage reveals to us that the Lord has approached His people through the revelations He bestowed on Moses and the Prophets who in turn voiced these revelations to the people. It happened that, due to this, the people were getting closer and closer to the Lord and understood His will and were doing accordingly. Then, man is free and gets to choose between evil and good, between the Living Lord and the other fetish gods. This is an important element and thus during the spiritual retreat we should first thank the Lord for creating us free. Then, we should distinguish our choices well, so they are harmonious with God's expectations of us.

This passage of Deuteronomy deals with the issues of freedom, an issue that has been the concern of people throughout centuries. And I may be also wondering: am I free or not?

Despite all God's revelations and despite all proofs throughout history maintaining that man is free, unless we experience this freedom personally and learn how to manage it, we will remain chained and guided. Freedom is a decision we take based on several criteria some of which could be natural and could have been granted to us at birth like the attitude, the personality and so on. Other criteria could be learned, like education and life's circumstances.

Our life will not be fruitful unless we feel the freedom, and unless we practice the convictions that have grown inside of us throughout the days. That's why, this whole thing requires thorough and serious thinking about ourselves, the Lord and our surroundings. The time you spend in a spiritual retreat is then perfect

for discovering the self and its depth: “Know yourself”, is the best way to living the freedom.

Discovering our freedom starts when we accept ourselves. It also starts when we love our own selves and thank the Lord for them. Whoever can't accept their true self with its talent and capacities can't practice their freedom. And whoever does not upgrade their skills because they are harnessed to the burden of their weakness and delusion will not feel the freedom.

Freedom is a set of gains we acquire day after day. One of these gains is discovering that the Lord has bestowed on us talents because he so loved us. These talents do not develop except willingly and with utmost freedom. This is because the relationship between freedom, talent and development is strongly correlative. The more I grow, the closer I feel to the Lord; for the Lord is complete. I shall never become a god but I will pass through some degrees of accomplishing perfection. When we realize that we shall never be perfect like our Lord, we'll accept our humble freedom and discover that freedom is strongly correlated to the virtue of being humble; not only this, but we'll also discover that without humbleness, we can't live freedom.

Some of the sins pertaining to the search for freedom are an abundance of possessiveness, an abundance of power, and an abundance of envy. This passage tells us, “In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou go to possess it.” He then adds, “but if thine heart turn away... ye shall surely perish...”

And this is what freedom is like, a double-edged sword. A lot of freedom leads to destruction and a little is not enough. Hence, it is important to differentiate the quality and quantity of the freedom I want to exercise and please the Lord with. The best type of freedom is the moderate one. Our freedom also pushes us to be responsible for our choices, and this is why we have to be congruent with our convictions; for the Lord has granted us all He has, and the most important thing He offered us is our freedom. Hopefully, we give the right answer and choose the best for our own selves.

We may not be able to differentiate between freedom and love. But love is a free decision I make in relation to what I am going through in life. In fact, all life circumstances require a remarkable compassionate stance. “Thou shalt love

thy neighbor as thyself" which means practice your freedom but stop when others' needs arise. Freedom is being able to decide that "whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," or opt for "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" or to any other justice. Of course, the Lord Jesus asks you to choose forgiveness. So which choice will you opt for? This is a time of meditation, so I invite you to choose deeply; do not stay at the door, rather go to the depth.