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The Freedoms of Man and Their Relation to God

Jacques Maritain, Yves R. Simon, and Mortimer J. Adler are in nothing more united than in their appreciation of the rich dimensions of human freedom and in their luminous defense of its proper rights. Despite their varied writings on this subject,¹ they share a common vision of what freedom is and why it is good. Fundamental to that vision is the insistence that there are distinct human freedoms that cannot be reduced to one. I shall first attempt to make this truth plain. Following their doctrine throughout,² but in my own words, I shall present the essential features of man's diverse freedoms and indicate how they differ. Only this work, I believe, makes possible a just assessment of God's governance of man's freedom: it overcomes pseudo-problems and unveils the real drama of man's freedom before God. Just what that is I hope to indicate in my concluding reflections.

¹This summary is primarily based on two works from each author: Maritain's "A Philosophy of Freedom," in *Freedom in the Modern World* (3-73) and chapter IV of *Existence and the Existent*, trans. Lewis Galantière and Gerald B. Phelan (New York: Doubleday, 1947), 85-122; Simon's *Freedom of Choice* and "On the Foreseeability of Free Acts," in *The New Scholasticism* XXII:4 (1948): 357-70; and Adler's two volumes on *The Idea of Freedom*, together with his trenchant comments in chapters 19 and 20 of *Six Great Ideas* (New York: Macmillan, 1981).

²Thus, the three freedoms discussed are easily recognizable as Adler's Circumstantial Freedom of Self-Realization, his Natural Freedom of Self-Determination, and his Acquired Freedom of Self-Perfection, respectively, recast in the language of "inclination." I have been guided principally by Adler in my discussion of the first freedom, by Simon in the second, and by Maritain in the third. My intention is to offer a synthetic view of freedom, one substantially shared by all three of them. In making their view mine, I have presented it in my own terms, while trying to be faithful to their common insights.

I. Freedom of Action

The most common freedom is the *freedom of action*, which may be defined as *the ability to act on one's inclinations*. This freedom is possessed by every degree of being, as our common speech indicates. We speak of the free fall of a stone, a vine spreading freely over a slope, the various animals moving freely in their native habitats; and we can also speak of the freedom of the angels to communicate with one another and to participate in the governance of the world, and of God's free creation and governance of that world. So, too, man is said to be free to act on his inclinations, whether they be rooted in the bodily or intellectual aspect of his nature: he is free to move about (with the other animals) and free to govern and transform his world (with the other intelligences).

This freedom is defined in relation to *another* being. One is free in one's action to the extent that one can operate in and upon an external reality, and to the extent that this reality does not limit one's independence. Thus, it is the freedom of one whole in relation to another (or others): it is an *external* freedom. Because the other being is so often recalcitrant to one's desires or inclinations, this freedom is primarily conceived *negatively*; that is, one is free insofar as one is *not* restrained in one's action by other agents. For man, this means that this freedom is primarily conceived in relation to *material* causes. He is generally seen and said to be free if he is not restrained in and through his *body*.

Every agent is in fact limited by other agents; thus, this freedom is never absolute, and its limited success must generally be fought for. The greater the power of a being, the greater its likely victory and freedom; for the same reason, the more immaterial the being, the greater its freedom. Thus, if it rains, salt will dissolve, and it is not free to protect itself from this dissolution. A flower can at least close its petals, and an animal is free to seek cover. The angels go much further, their nature freeing them from all material interference in their operations. Yet, even with God (and *a fortiori* with the angels), this freedom is not absolute. For His will is truly (if relatively) *resisted* by the sins of His spiritual creatures (be they angels or men): the good inclinations caused in them by His will are frustrated and limited by their sins.

Man experiences a limitation on his freedom of action both by the material and the intellectual world. His physical environment limits him, as does his body: no man is free to live without oxygen; a man with polio is not free to set track records. Man is equally (if not more) enslaved, however, by other intelligences, most obviously his fellow men. He is limited by his social and political environment. It is in this sphere that he especially seeks to win his freedom. And, again, this freedom is primarily con-

ceived negatively, as a freedom from outside restraint or coercion. Thus, one will speak of free trade (freedom from governmental regulation) or free speech (freedom from governmental censorship).

Here, at the very outset of our analysis, we discover the essentially *analogous* nature of freedom. This is so not merely because freedom is formally participated in by different degrees of being and thus in different ways. It is evident even in the case of man alone. On the one hand, man's freedom of action is a freedom to *make* things and to transform his world. Thus, we speak of the freedom of his labor, free trade, a free press, and artistic freedom. In each case, man is held to be free to act on an external reality; these are examples of *transitive* action and are rightly placed in the category of action. On the other hand, man's freedom of action is a freedom to *do* things and to express himself. Thus, we speak of his freedom of movement, or his freedom of assembly, or of speech, or even of thought. Here, his freedom of action is not to go outside himself to transform another; rather, these are examples of actions that primarily perfect the agent. They are *immanent* acts that are rightly placed in the category of quality. Freedom is a mode of action; it is as analogous in its nature as action itself.³ Nonetheless, this freedom seems to be predicated primarily of actions in and upon the world: transitive acts. Thus, even God is said to be free in this sense of freedom insofar as He can create and shape beings external to Himself.

This freedom is the most obvious one and the one most universally recognized. It is our first conception of freedom as children. As a matter of fact, when I told my eight-year-old daughter that I was struggling with a paper on freedom, she looked at me with some surprise and explained to me that this was a simple matter: "Freedom," she matter-of-factly declared, "is being able to do what I want!" Nor is it surprising that this should be a child's first conception of freedom. Her first freedom was one of controlling her body, of being able to walk, climb, and so on. And that freedom of movement is curbed and limited by parental authority: an external agent. Similarly, my students, who are defining themselves over against the authority of parents, teachers, and society, usually conceive of freedom this way, albeit with a little more sophistication. "I ought to be free," they confidentially assert, "to do whatever I want, so long as I don't curtail someone else's freedom." Law and authority are thus conceived as restraints upon freedom; they are external agencies limiting the ability to

³For the analogous nature of action, see Yves R. Simon's "An Essay on the Classification of Action and the Understanding of Act," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 41 (1971): 518-41.

act on one's inclinations.

One who gratuitously asserts an absolute right to act as he pleases can justly be accused of having confused the legitimate rights of freedom with mere license. Nonetheless, he defends a vital truth when he asserts that human freedom requires external action. For man is an embodied being. His need to grow and move are intrinsic to his nature. To violate his physical freedom is to do violence to his very person. This is why the natural image of freedom *denied* is immobility, whether frozen in ice or impaled on a cross. Furthermore, man naturally seeks to express himself through his body. To deny him the opportunity to speak the truth or to express his love, or to deny him that greatest external good, the communion of friends, is to strike at his very heart. Indeed, his spirit not only can be limited by denying him physical freedom; it can also be profoundly altered through his body. Perhaps the ultimate case of this is feral children. The unfortunately more common case of children brutalized by their parents indicates how deeply one can strike the spirit through the body. Again, one can affect man's inner self through his body chemistry. Or one can coerce him through pain or fear, either for his own safety or that of his loved ones. In these various ways, to strike at man's freedom of action is to tyrannize his very soul.

II. Freedom of Choice

When we distinguish acts freely undertaken from ones that have been coerced through violence or fear, we have begun to speak of a different sort of freedom. For a man who acts under duress may possess an equal freedom of action as one who does not: his ability to act on his inclination may be identical. He differs in the way he arrives at that inclination: by duress, not freely. Here we are speaking of a freedom prior to that of action: the freedom to form the very inclination upon which he acts. This freedom may be defined as *the ability to incline or not to a known good*. The man under duress is being more or less compelled to incline to one course of action, and is more or less unable to incline to its opposite. Substituting "to choose" for "to incline" (as we easily can do), we see that this freedom is the one usually spoken of as man's *freedom of choice*.

Man's freedom of choice is rooted in his intellectual nature. As the given definition indicates, this freedom comes from knowledge. Thus, it is a freedom man shares only with other intellectual beings: with angels and God. This freedom is an *internal* one: man's ability relates to known options he has in mind, that he possesses. It concerns the *formal* cause: the

known good. His love is solicited by various known goods, or just by one. He may be initially attracted to one or several, but to which will he definitively give himself? In what will he place his happiness? This is the question he faces, and he faces it freely insofar as he is able to choose or not choose the object before him. Such a freedom can be conceived either positively or negatively with equal weight: it is a freedom for or from the good at hand.

This freedom corresponds to the freedom we experience in ourselves as we deliberate about what decision to make. Indeed, it is our internal experience that first leads us to identify this freedom. And it is by virtue of this freedom that we declare ourselves responsible for the external acts we go on to commit. We accept responsibility for them because we were free to choose to do them or not to do them. We determined our course of action, did not have it determined for us. Because this experience of ourselves is common, and because a sense of responsibility is fundamental to social intercourse, this second freedom is commonly admitted.

Yet the existence of this freedom is controversial. The chief difficulty is that it seems to violate the principle of causality; that is, it looks as though affirming a freedom to choose is equally affirming that nothing causes one to choose. But this is absurd. If there is no cause of one's choice, it will proceed from nothing; but from nothing nothing comes. Thus, some have been led to assert a determinism that denies free choice. And, since this freedom is defined in relation to the known good, this determinism is commonly one of motive: that is, one chooses as one does because one good is seen to be better than another. The posited indifference before the known good is illusory: one's choice is necessarily determined by a previous judgment that choosing *this* good is one's best option.

There is a basic truth behind this objection. To make a free choice be an uncaused choice (in the manner of the Epicurean "swerve") is to make it contradictory and senseless.⁴ It is true that the will cannot move to make the known good its own unless it is moved to act. Ultimately, this means that the will does not incline freely to *all* its acts. By its nature and of necessity, it is moved to its proper object: the comprehensive good, the *bonum in communi*, goodness in all its extent and intensity. Put more plainly, of necessity man wants to be fulfilled, to be happy. About this orientation, he

⁴For an excellent discussion of the Epicurean *clinamen*, see Simon's Introduction to *Freedom*.

is not free to choose.

And yet, precisely in admitting this necessary act, one grounds the freedom of man's other acts. For while man is not free in relation to his ultimate end of being happy, he is free in relation to the means that may lead to this end. Only were he presented with a means that fulfilled his natural inclination to the comprehensive good would he choose it of necessity. Again, put plainly, were man to see God, he would love Him. Every other object falls short of man's standard of judging: it measures up to the good and is satisfying in one respect, but it fails to do so in another. Considering my honor and love of country, it is good to do battle; considering the risk to my life and my family's welfare, it is not good. Faced with these diverse considerations, neither course of action dominates my desire. On the contrary, my will possesses a dominating indifference to the motives at hand: one is finally judged to be right only because I give myself to it.

Nor does this determination, which makes the known good the one finally judged right, come from nothing. On the contrary, the cause of the determination is man's *active* will of the comprehensive good. One's free choice of a particular good is caused by one's natural love of the universal good. The active power of choosing or not choosing lies in one's own will, in one's own power. Rightly, then, is man's freedom of choice said to be an active and dominating indifference to the known good.⁵ This definition does equal justice to our internal experience and to the principle of causality.

Freedom of choice, like freedom of action, is not absolute. The will of

⁵Maritain uses this language of "active and dominating indifference" from his very first work (1914). He gets it from Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance, O.P., who, in his turn, is here depending upon John of St. Thomas (in his *de Anima*, q. xii, a. 2). Maritain expressly refers us to Garrigou-Lagrance's first work on freedom, to which he says he is "especially indebted" (*Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison in collaboration with J. Gordon Andison [New York: Philosophical Library, 1955], 266, n. 2). Garrigou-Lagrance's study is "Intellectualisme et Liberté chez Saint Thomas," in *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 1 (1907): 649-73 and 2 (1908): 5-32.

the angel, as well as man, of necessity seeks happiness, and God Himself cannot but love Himself and be blessed. Unlike freedom of action, this freedom is restricted to intellectual beings. Yet, because it is natural to them, it can never be lost as long as they exist. It can be more or less impeded in man's case, because he is an embodied intellect, but it cannot be lost. Thus, it is present in the good and the wicked alike, even if they have irrevocably committed themselves to a final end.⁶ Whether this end be good or evil, a man is free to choose various good or evil means, as ways of loving and serving his end. Indeed, he is free to choose a means even if it is the only one presently available to attain his end.⁷ Provided he recognizes that it is only a partial good, he remains free to choose it or not. The known disproportion between particular and universal goodness is the sufficient foundation of man's freedom of choice.

III. Freedom of Spirit

The natural desire for the comprehensive good is, in the practical order, what the principle of non-contradiction is in the speculative order.⁸ As with that principle, it pervades its entire order: it is implicit to all desires or inclinations. Yet, just as one cannot *deduce* other speculative principles from the principle of non-contradiction (say, the principle that the whole is greater than its part), so one cannot *order* one's inclinations on the basis of this desire. For the fulfillment of each of those inclinations in one way meets the desire for the comprehensive good and in another way does not. It does not provide an adequate guide for choosing among them.

Yet man finds himself in need of an ordering principle. For, by nature, he inclines to diverse and potentially conflicting goods: he desires to live, to procreate and look after his young, to seek the truth, to enjoy the friendship of others, and in general to enjoy the pleasures of his sensitive nature. Without a guide to reconciling these diverse desires, he will remain in a state of self-division, torn between various goods, indecisive and perplexed about which to choose. Or, worse, he will enslave himself to one of his desires at the expense of others and of his overall well-being. Various

⁶Maritain is explicit about this, at least for the blessed: "freedom of choice . . . remains of course, for it is the privilege of a spiritual nature, and it continues to manifest the lofty independence of this nature in face of all that is means or intermediate end: but not in face of that which is the End" (*Freedom*, 35).

⁷Simon insists on this point in "Foreseeability," 362–63.

⁸For Maritain's most extensive treatment of this parallel, see the sixth *leçon* of his posthumously published *La loi naturelle ou loi non écrite* (Editions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse: Fribourg, 1986), particularly 134–35.

forms of this enslavement are commonly acknowledged: bodily addictions of various sorts (e.g., drugs), emotional phobias and manias (e.g., claustrophobia, kleptomania), domination by a passion ("a slave to lust") or to an unreasonable pursuit of truth (e.g., the mad scientist). The more a person becomes attached to one of these partial goods, the less free he becomes to choose any other.

Fortunately, man possesses an intrinsic principle of order: his practical intelligence. It is the nature of the intellect to order, and man possesses a natural inclination to the good of his reason, to the *bonum honestum* or to the moral good. If he follows this inclination, he can give due weight to each of his various desires: he can master his passions and provide for the well-being of his entire person. He can thereby avoid self-division and achieve a stable peace within himself: he can become a man of integrity. We recognize an analogous situation in the realm of art: the master craftsman is one whose entire talent is placed at the service of his art. Through discipline and hard work, his art is at the disposal of his creative inspiration. He is free to use his talent as he chooses.

This sort of freedom is obviously different from the previous ones. It is not a freedom of the whole self set over against others, as is the freedom of action, but a freedom achieved *within* the self: with this freedom, a person becomes an *ordered* whole. Nor is this freedom something natural, inborn, as is the freedom of choice; rather, it is something usually gained through a succession of free choices. By them, a person *attains* self-mastery. He places his lower self at the service of his better self: his passions do not war with his reason, but serve it. Such a freedom may be defined as *the ready inclination to love and do the true good*⁹ and might be called a *freedom of spirit*. If man's freedom of action principally concerns his body, and his freedom of choice his will, his freedom of spirit relates to his entire *person*: by it, he is able to give his entire being to a chosen good and to a course of action.

Some have refused to admit that there are true goods for man, that he possesses real needs whose fulfillment perfect him, as opposed to merely apparent needs and goods. They deny natural and objective goods and hence deny the existence of spiritual freedom. Yet, they are rarely consistent in their position. For, with most sane people, they admit that phobias, manias, and addictions are sicknesses, forms of enslavement. Now this absence of freedom is due to a person's state, his entire condition; it is not due to an inability to determine his inclination or act on it. One can freely choose to become an addict, and one may freely act on one's addiction. To

⁹I am here obviously recasting Simon's felicitous use of "readiness" to describe moral virtue. See *The Definition of Moral Virtue*, 71ff.

admit, then, that an addict lacks freedom is to concede that there is another form of freedom beyond the ones previously given. In any case, as Aristotle remarked long ago, whatever certain people may *say* about all goods being equal, they never *act* as though this were so; instead, they live their lives as though one course of action were better than another.¹⁰ Implicit in all they do is an affirmation of the existence of spiritual freedom.

Such a freedom is not an ability for opposites; rather, it is a stable inclination of the will towards one goal: the true, moral good. In possessing it, a person possesses a spontaneous and ready attraction to the honest good. Such a freedom is primarily *positive* in import. True, it can be described as a freedom from moral evil. Such a liberation, however, does not leave the subject on some neutral ground; on the contrary, being so liberated frees him *for* the opposite order that he now wants to serve.

Spiritual freedom is even narrower in extent than freedom of choice. Indeed, it is natural and necessary to God's will alone to incline to the true good. For angels and men, this is something that must be achieved through the operation of their free choice. And it is an achievement ever at risk unless and until they see God Himself, for only then will they infallibly exercise their freedom for the moral order rather than against it. To possess an inclination exclusively for the true good is to will in a divine way, not a creaturely way. "Freedom" is a holy name principally on the basis of this freedom, for it is proper to God alone.

IV. The Freedoms Compared

This freedom is illumined by a comparison to the other two. Its most important contrast to a freedom of action comes in relation to law. If one accepts only the latter freedom, one will usually conceive authority and law as restraints, perhaps necessary, but regrettable: limits on one's freedom of movement and expression. Order is here opposed to freedom. In a freedom of spirit, on the other hand, true law is something essentially liberating. For example, placing the passions under the authority of reason frees one to accomplish the other goals proper to man's nature. Thus, a man possessing spiritual freedom readily embraces any law worthy of its name.

A similar difference is seen in relation to other agents. If one accepts only a freedom of action, another person is a potential enemy, someone who may restrict one's own agency. The person is here an object to be reckoned with. A freedom of spirit, on the other hand, places one at the disposal of the other. Free from being absorbed in self-conflict, the person is

¹⁰Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1008b 10–30.

ready to go out to the other and give him his proper respect and even love. The other is a potential friend, another self. He is viewed as a subject, not as an object. Love of one's own good becomes identified with a love of his good.

More significant for my purposes here is the comparison to man's freedom of choice. Recall that the latter is rooted in the *intellect* and in a *formal* cause—the known disproportion between particular and universal goodness; freedom of spirit, on the other hand, is rooted in the *will* and in an *efficient* cause—the ready inclination to the true good. Note, also, that the basis of a freedom of choice is an inclination to the comprehensive good or *bonum in communi*, whereas the basis of a freedom of spirit is an inclination to the moral good or *bonum honestum*. Note, finally, that freedom of choice is based on a dominating *indifference* towards a known good; a freedom of spirit, on the other hand, is hardly indifferent in the face of various goods, but *firmly inclines* away from the apparent good and to the true good. A consequence of this difference is that man's freedom of choice, in itself, will always be fallible in relation to the moral good: a person is free to choose it or to fail to choose it. On the contrary, a freedom of spirit tends toward infallibility in relation to the moral good: at its term, a person possessing this freedom perfectly cannot fail to choose the true good.

Although man's several freedoms are distinct, there is an evident order between them. In the order of genesis, they follow one another as examined. Thus, a freedom of action conditions and makes possible the exercise of a freedom of choice. It is hard to imagine a person who could live with *no* freedom of action; such extreme brutalization, barring the intervention of divine aid, would so dehumanize anyone as to render his free choice practically impossible. Free choice, for its part, is the condition of spiritual freedom: one becomes rooted in the true good because one has freely placed one's happiness in it, rather than somewhere else. In the order of ends, however, the order between the freedoms is reversed. Freedom of action is valuable because it conditions freedom of choice and makes possible its natural expression; and freedom of choice is good because it makes possible the perfection of the entire self achieved in spiritual freedom. Man's freedom is most valuable because, through it, he can become like God.

Such a subordination of one freedom to another, however, cannot be made absolute. From the perspective of spiritual freedom, law is salutary and necessary to educate man's passions and will. Yet it would be wrong to impose the moral law in all its detail, either upon an individual or the body politic. For man, in possessing his freedom of choice, possesses the freedom to err; and restricting his freedom to express error can be to strike

illegitimately at that freedom. Thus, the state, for example, should restrict freedom of action only where it would harm the common good of society. Conversely, one seeking spiritual freedom may have to forfeit certain freedoms of action in themselves good. For example, brotherly love may require that one become a prisoner on behalf of one's neighbor. In fact, because our body is not subservient to our will, nor our will to its true good, there are inevitable conflicts between the demands of these different freedoms as we discover them in ourselves.

V. Man's Freedom in Relation to God

Forgive me for having gone over largely common ground that is no doubt familiar to most. Having done so, however, puts us in a position properly to relate man's freedom to God (as traditionally conceived: the creator and governor of the world). In effect, we can now see that certain difficulties in this area are really false problems, based on an inadequate appreciation of man's diverse freedoms. And we can also see the great question posed to man by his freedom before God. It is to these matters that my concluding reflections turn.

If someone only affirms man's freedom of action, God almost certainly will be conceived as an enemy of it. He will be seen as the ultimate external agent set over against man. By His law and by His punishment against those who transgress it, He denies man freedom of action. Such a narrow and false view of God's dealing with man is based on a narrow and false view of man's freedom. To dispel it, one need only recall that man possesses a real freedom of choice. He does so because of his very nature. Thus, far from being a denier of man's freedom, God is the cause of it, by creating him an intelligent and voluntary being. Not only does He give him freedom of choice, but He also gives him a world in which that freedom of choice can freely act.

Truth to tell, it is difficult to posit only a freedom of action. For, in this case, man's actions turn out to be only the expression of un-free inclinations determined by previous causes. Nor can it even be termed a freedom of self-expression, without equivocation. For what sort of self is it that cannot freely respond to the attraction of various goods? Such a being does not endure, but is constantly changing given the agents acting on it: one is faced with a series of "phenomenal" selves but no real *self*. Furthermore, why should one become exercised over the rightful freedoms of such a series of beings, who seem little better, ontologically, than inert matter? As a consequence, it is far more common to find people who assert both freedom of action and of choice.

Seemingly, it is from such a perspective that many Catholics speak when they strenuously advocate the proper rights of academic freedom on

Catholic campuses of higher learning: the dignity of man as student and teacher requires that he be free to determine the curricular requirements and educational goals of the institute. Scholars should be free, that is, for their intellectual pursuits and from the outside authority of the Church and the mandates of Her faith. Such a brouhaha, however, is another false problem. For the Church, in calling Her sons and daughters to place their faith at the heart of their educational enterprise, is precisely seeking to orient man towards his true freedom as a child of God. Presumably, Catholics still believe that, in knowing the truth of their faith, they shall be set free. No doubt, this still leaves much room for discussing how that authority is best served on the present campus. But to cast the debate simply in terms of academic freedom versus ecclesial authority is to present a false dilemma: it is to forget that man's freedom of choice is at the service of a spiritual freedom that is his final end.

Even when man's diverse freedoms are recognized, false debates can arise from not keeping their differences clearly in view. This seems in part to have happened in the famous argument between the Jesuits and Dominicans at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Jesuits never tired of insisting that man's freedom gave him the power to choose the good or *not* to choose it. He could fail to choose as he ought, and therefore God could justly hold him accountable for his fault. And this is true: the mode proper to man's freedom of choice is a fallible one. For their part, the Dominicans held that man could not choose the moral good unless God moved him to it. And this likewise is true: man's spiritual freedom is made possible because God inclines him to the *bonum honestum*. Each of the parties in a sense speaks past the legitimate concerns of the other, failing to see that man's freedom of choice and his spiritual freedom have diverse bases. Once this is recognized, it is possible to untie their Gordian knot, by affirming that man is moved by God to the honest good in a way that can be resisted. Thus, he only chooses well because God *moves* him to do so, yet his *failure* to do so is in his own hands and is his responsibility.¹¹

We are thus led to recognize the true dilemma of freedom and the magnitude of the choice before God that a free creature must make. On the one hand, being endowed with free choice, he sees that he possesses a real ability to create his destiny. He can be the author of his own moral order. He can place his happiness in his own free will, a depth of himself seen

¹¹It is thus that Maritain offers his way out of the "Molinist-Bañezian" impasse, save that he speaks of a resistible motion as a "shatterable" one: a purely verbal difference. See *God and the Permission of Evil*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1966), chapters I and II, especially 38ff.

and naturally loved. God has placed within his hands a certain autonomy, a certain independence that mimics His own sovereign independence (*aseitas*). On the other hand, being moved towards a spiritual freedom, he sees that he possesses the real ability to be whole, to be at peace. He discovers in himself a certain order, one not created by himself. Its author is unseen. In following it, he moves towards an unseen goal. He thereby relinquishes the opportunity to be the first cause of his moral life, implicitly subordinating his will to God. Yet, in doing so, he keeps the possibility of seeing Him and being happy.

God is radically independent and absolutely blessed. It is not possible for a free creature to be both of these. He must choose. He can be independent, insofar as this is possible to a creature. To do so means turning away from God and His order, thereby relinquishing any right to see the Absolute Good and the happiness that goes with that sight. Or he can follow the order towards the true good found in himself. To do so means subordinating his will to the author of that order and to His will. The price of glory is the sacrifice of his self-will. A creature can be his own master and lose happiness or he can be the servant of God and gain happiness; he cannot, however, be his own master and be happy. That is the privilege of God alone.

We can see, then, that it is not absurdly paradoxical to say that man must give up his freedom in order to find his freedom, or that he must lose himself in order to gain himself. For, by committing himself to the pursuit of spiritual freedom, he gives up a certain possibility contained in his freedom of choice. As his will becomes rooted in the true good, he becomes less and less indifferent to the goods before him. The more he places God first in his life, the more his destiny is outside the control of his will. The self-mastery that comes with spiritual freedom is achieved by the sacrifice of his possible independence.

Thus, the conclusion to which our entire analysis leads is that the true drama of freedom is a drama of love. In governing His free creatures according to their fallible freedom, God gives them an awful opportunity: to love Him enough to offer up their own independence to Him. They give this up to Him sight unseen. There is a self-emptying here that is the true creaturely image of God's creative love. The risk is that they will refuse Him their love. That is their privilege as free creatures. They can decide that the price of a possible glory is not worth it: they can prefer their own seen will to His unseen one.

I cannot fail to add, finally, that this natural structure and the choice it provokes are not destroyed, but deepened, under the present conditions in which man finds himself. Now, he discovers in himself not merely the possibility of not following the moral order, but also actual inclinations

against it. Now, in following the true good, he must therefore sacrifice even more of himself, for he is in part identified with those tendencies. And he also comes to realize, in making this attempt, that he no longer possesses the capacity to succeed on his own. If he is to become spiritually free, he must admit his own relative impotence to accomplish this. Someone must help free him from his self-division. Thus, the submission of his will must be even greater, the sacrifice and the love demanded even deeper. For the Christian, this work is undertaken in the full knowledge that it is crucifying, that great sacrifices will be asked of him. Certainly, a Catholic can never forget this, for the one sacrifice that makes his possible is daily offered up on the altars of his Church. In the light of that sacrificial love, forever set against the enslavement of sin and death, there is hardly any word more sacred to him than freedom.

Donald A. Gallagher

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Message to the A
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Jacques Marit

This message to my fellow memb
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comes to you from Rome, where I
copal Synod. With regret, I note tha
have missed since its founding in 1
question: what path should we as
sue in the years to come?

The pathways are various. One
following Maritain literally and al
tion. Our decade of work shows tha
be borne in mind as a temptation. A
ly honoring the name of Maritain,
with little or no reference to his pri
is no real danger to us in this, but i

A praiseworthy pathway is one
society dedicated to the study and
effect, this is what we have been ar
more. It may well be what we dc
amine this objective and judge wh

Sometimes I reflect that, in thi
upon to be prophets as well as stri
as well as a philosopher; rather,
prophetic dimension. There is an a
Antimoderne and Maritain the elde
that he recognized the historic
hesitate to expose and criticize it:
prophets and not merely academi

In this brief message, I would :