

### **Man's Freedom**

#### **What is Freedom?**

Freedom is the power given by God to act or not to act, to do this or to do that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. Freedom characterises properly human acts. The more one does what is good, the freer one becomes. Freedom attains its proper perfection when it is directed toward God, the highest good and our beatitude. Freedom implies also the possibility of choosing between good and evil. The choice of evil is an abuse of freedom and leads to the slavery of sin.



#### **What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility?**

Freedom makes people responsible for their actions to the extent that they are voluntary, even if the imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or sometimes cancelled by ignorance, inadvertence, duress, fear, inordinate attachments, or habit.

#### **Why does everyone have a right to exercise freedom?**

The right to the exercise of freedom belongs to everyone because it is inseparable from his or her dignity as a human person. Therefore this right must always be respected, especially in moral and religious matters, and it must be recognised and protected by civil authority within the limits of the common good and a just public order.

#### **What place does human freedom have in the plan of Salvation?**

Our freedom is weakened because of original sin. This weakness is intensified because of successive sins. Christ, however, set us free “so that we should remain free” (Galatians 5:1). With his grace, the Holy Spirit leads us to spiritual freedom to make us free co-workers with him in the Church and in the world.

#### **What are the sources of the morality of human acts?**

The morality of human acts depends on three sources: the *object* chosen, either a true or apparent good; the *intention* of the subject who acts, that is, the purpose for which the subject performs the act; and the *circumstances* of the act, which include its consequences.

#### **When is an act morally good?**

An act is morally good when it assumes, all at once, the goodness of the object, of the end and of the circumstances. A chosen object can by itself vitiate an act in its entirety, even if the intention is good. It is not licit to do evil so that good may result from it. An evil end corrupts the action, even if the object is good in itself. On the other hand, a good end does not make an act good if the object of that act is evil, since the end does not justify the means.

Circumstances can increase or diminish the responsibility of the one who is acting but they cannot change the moral quality of the acts themselves. They never make good an act which is in itself evil.

### **Are there acts which are always illicit?**

There are some acts which, in and of themselves, are always illicit by reason of their object (for example, blasphemy, homicide, adultery). Choosing such acts entails a disorder of the will, that is, a moral evil which can never be justified by appealing to the good effects which could possibly result from them.

### **What are the passions?**

The passions are the feelings, the emotions or the movements of the sensible appetite – natural components of human psychology – which incline a person to act or not to act in view of what that person perceives as a good or evil. The principal passions are love and hatred, desire and fear, joy, sadness and anger. The chief passion is love which is drawn by the attraction of the good. One can only love what is good, real or apparent.

### **Are the passions morally good or bad?**

The passions, insofar as they are movements of the sensible appetite, are neither good nor bad in themselves. They are good when they contribute to a good action and they are evil in the opposite case. They can be taken up into the virtues or perverted by the vices.

*The Fire of Feelings – public domain pictures*



*It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact [deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk](mailto:deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk)*