



Pope Says Freedom Is Realized in Service Delivers "Lectio Divina" on Paul's Letter to Galatians

ROME, FEB. 23, 2009 (Zenit.org).- Human beings are truly free when we live in the truth of our dependency on God's love, count on him to provide all things, and serve others, says Benedict XVI.

The Pope affirmed this Friday in a visit to Rome's major seminary, in which he delivered a "lectio divina" on the text of St. Paul to the Galatians: "You were called to freedom."

"At all times," he noted, "freedom has been humanity's great dream, since the beginning, but particularly in modern times."

The Pontiff posed these questions to the seminarians: "What is freedom? How can we be free?"

Referring to St. Paul's exhortation to not use freedom as an opportunity for the "flesh," the Holy Father noted that this "flesh" refers to "the absolutizing of the I, of the I that wants to be all and have everything for itself."

He explained: "In short, the absolute I, which does not depend on anything or anyone, seems really to possess freedom. I am free if I do not depend on anyone, if I can do everything I wish."

However, he pointed out, this is not freedom but rather the "degradation of man."

True freedom

Benedict XVI asserted that "we are free if we become one another's servants."

He added: "To reduce oneself to the flesh, apparently raising oneself to the rank of divinity -- 'I, man alone' -- introduces a lie [...]."

"This goes against the truth of our being. Our truth is, above all, that we are creatures, creatures of God and we live in relationship with the Creator.

"We are rational beings, and only by accepting this relationship do we enter into

truth, otherwise we fall into falsehood and, in the end, are destroyed by it."

The Pope underlined the dependency that we as creatures have on God, who loves us. Thus, he said, "our dependence implies being in the realm of his love, in this case, in fact, dependency is freedom."

He added: "And because of this to see God, to orient oneself to God, to know God, to know the will of God, to insert oneself in his will, that is, in the love of God is to enter increasingly into the realm of truth."

Serve others

The Pontiff turned his focus to the relationship each person has with each other. He said, "In other words, human freedom is, on one hand, to be in the joy and great realm of the love of God, but it also implies being only one thing with the other and for the other."

"Only a shared freedom is human freedom," he affirmed, and "in being together we can enter the symphony of freedom."

The Holy Father stated: "To serve one another becomes an instrument of freedom, and here we can include a whole philosophy of politics according to the social doctrine of the Church, which helps us to find this common order that gives each one his place in the common life of humanity."

"The first reality that must be respected, therefore, is truth: Freedom against truth is not freedom. To serve one another creates the common realm of freedom."

"By participation in the sacraments," he pointed out, "by listening to the Word of God, the Divine Will, the divine law really enters our will, our will identifies with his, they become only one will and thus we are really free, we can really do what we will, because we love with Christ, we love in truth and with truth."