

## Sunday Message from Fr William for the Sixteenth Sunday of the Year 2023

*The 'Other World' continued*

Yes, the Father is all giving, giving, giving. It is he who gives us life. It is he who gives us the Son, Jesus Christ. He also gives us each other.

Apart from these gifts, what would you say are the two highest gifts we can have as human beings? Here's proposing to you my top two candidates: Freedom, and Love.

What is Freedom? It's more than just freedom of movement. It's more than just freedom from constraint, external or internal. Freedom is the ability to make choices, to act, and to live, in accord with your deepest desires and aspirations. Freedom means that your choices, your actions, the life you live, arise from the deepest part of yourself, the deepest part of your personal identity, over and above any external restraints or compulsions, over and above any of the more superficial desires that vie for your attention. 'By its liberty, the human person transcends the stars and all the world of nature.' (*Jacques Maritain – The Person and the Common Good, Chapter 2*)

Love, what is Love? Both Freedom and Love are so vast that it's impossible to capture either of them in a few words, or even in a thousand libraries of books. It was said of Jesus that if all he did was written down 'the world itself could not contain all the books that would be written'. (John 21:25). The same could be said of Love, and the vast ocean of all that it is. But I need to give you a starting definition, so here it is: Love is the orientation and the gift of oneself to another person. This can take different forms and different degrees in different contexts – Love in marriage, Love in friendship, Love in family affiliation, Love in altruistic outreach. Love springs from the deepest part of ourselves and engages the whole of our being, the whole of our psychosomatic subjectivity, if you'll excuse this technical but useful expression. And for Love to be authentic it can only spring from our freedom, from the ability to choose, to act and to live according to our deepest desires and aspirations. Freedom is the prerequisite for Love.

In this quest to discover what the 'other world' will be like I began by asking 'Who will be there?' Why am I now talking about the gifts of Freedom and Love? Because it will help to answer the next question – What will life be like in the 'other world'? It will be a life of perfect Freedom, possibly infinite Freedom. And it will be a life of perfect Love, possibly infinite Love.

That's the short answer to the question 'What will life be like?' – perfect Freedom and perfect Love; possibly infinite Freedom and infinite Love. But we can only really begin to grasp what this means, and what our human life will be like in the 'other world' once we've glimpsed something of *their* life – I mean the life of these three persons who are the 'be all' of the other world – The Father, The Son, and The Spirit; because our life in the 'other world' will be a participation in theirs.

*to be continued...*



Sixteenth Sunday of  
the Year, 23 July 2023