

Sunday Message from Fr William for the First Sunday of Lent Ordinary Time 2024

*The 'Other World' continued from 11.02.24*

Does this surprise you that the 'influence', literally the 'inflowing', of the Spirit into Man increases his freedom? Don't be surprised! Yes, if the Spirit were something alien to Man this would be a takeover, restricting Man's freedom. Man would be less free to choose and act according to his own desires and aspirations. He would be induced or even compelled to choose and act in ways contrary to his personal autonomy. But the Spirit is not alien to Man. The influence or inflowing of the Spirit is an integral part of who he is, an integral part of his personal and ongoing creation.

If you want an analogy for how this works, don't think demonic possession (see 11 Feb 2024). Instead, if you want an analogy for how the Spirit forms Man, and in doing so enables him to grow in freedom, then think of how a parent influences her child. She passes on her knowledge. She teaches him skills. She shares with him her wisdom. She trains him in self-discipline. All this contributes to the development of the child. Is the child becoming less himself under his parent's influence? No, he is becoming more himself. Is the child becoming less free under his parent's influence? No, as the parent helps her child grow in knowledge and skill and wisdom and self-discipline she is at the same time empowering him, opening up for him new horizons, endowing him with new options for deliberation and new opportunities for action. She is contributing to his ongoing growth in freedom.

But that's as far as the analogy takes us. The 'influence' of the Spirit into Man is something qualitatively more than the influence of a human parent. A human parent is of this world. Her influence on the child can help him grow in knowledge and skill and self-discipline for interaction in this world. This parental influence, and the empowerment and freedom it nurtures, is on the same level as Man's empowerment in *The Sentinel* and *The Black Cloud*, only with a lot more love! (see 14 January 2024). By contrast, the Spirit is of the 'other world'. The influence, or inflowing, of the Spirit into Man brings about not just enhanced human capabilities, but a process of spiritualisation. The spiritualisation of Man is an integral part of his ongoing creation, of his becoming fully human, of his becoming the 'spiritual body' that Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 15.

This implies a new kind of freedom in Man, a new level of freedom. The gradual influence of the Spirit is already taking Man into the freedom of the 'other world', a freedom that is not only on a different plane altogether, but potentially without limit. The gradual influence of the Spirit is already taking Man 'up' into a participation in the life of Father, Son and Spirit, into the life of the 'other world'.

So, whether you consider Man to be (a) a purely physical body, or (b) a physical body plus immaterial 'soul', or (c) a physical body already partially spiritualised by the Spirit, whatever your position on this, the more the Spirit is 'breathed into', 'poured into' Man, the more Man 'drinks in', is 'plunged into', is 'filled with' the Spirit, then the more truly free he becomes, with a freedom that transcends this world.

*to be continued...*

*Wilson*

18 February 2024