

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA Freedom in Christ, Part I

“[Y]ou were called to freedom . . . only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Galatians 5:13–14)

Insight

How do you, your family members, and your friends take risks for others? Why would anyone take a risk for someone else?

The upstairs hallway was beginning to fill with smoke, making it difficult to see and breathe. The firefighter, Craig, knew his team was close behind him, but he was leading today. He stayed low. He cautiously and efficiently made his way into the first bedroom, searching for the young girl that the frantic mother outside said was still in the house.

It was only his fifth fire call and the worst he had seen. Craig was anxious and afraid. He checked the second bedroom and opened the closet door. The girl was curled up on the floor, breathing weakly. He carried her outside for help.

Craig knew that what he was doing was dangerous. He was putting his life on the line. But he wouldn't trade this job for any other. There was danger in it, but also great satisfaction, especially on days like today when he could rescue a little girl. Her mom cried tears of joy and gratitude.

For Reflection . . .

In Christ, we become children of God, enabling us to follow the Lord's example and act rightly, doing good.

When have you sacrificed yourself for another, perhaps even to the point of experiencing pain or hardship? Why did you do that?

How do you feel when you put yourself out for others?

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1701–1748

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 307–313

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 358–411

Church Teaching

Two Tendencies

Created in the image of God, we are endowed with an immortal soul, the gift of rationality, and free will. We can explore the proper order of creation, see how we fit into it, and freely choose to embrace goodness. Unfortunately, we also suffer the effects of Original Sin. Our minds can become confused and our wills weakened. Baptism sweeps away Original Sin from our souls, but its effects linger, in the form of concupiscence, the inclination to sin.

In other words, the struggle between good and evil continues. Thankfully, in Christ, God offers us sure guidance in the battle between these two tendencies.

Responsible Exercise of Freedom

Free will means we can shape our life in accord with what is most excellent, noble, and holy. Free will enables us to become who God wishes us to be in Christ.

In fact, the more we do what is good, the freer we become! Doing good cultivates virtue within us, increases our knowledge about the good, and strengthens our self-mastery.

Christ, Moral Exemplar

Striving for blessedness before God is at the heart of Jesus' teaching. As Lord of life, Christ is the exemplar of the moral law that guides us.

The law of Christ urges us to love God and our neighbor as our self—even to the point of suffering and dying for others. Christ lights the way as we choose to live a moral life. Blessed rewards await those who follow his way.