



MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

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INTERIOR FREEDOM & AUTHORITY

By Father Bill McCann



After some days of rain/snow and overcast skies, the sun finally poked through the clouds to reveal signs of spring for Marymount Hermitage's Day of Pilgrimage on March 26. The "pilgrims" traveled from all directions to get away from life's usual activities to spend a day in the quiet beauty surrounding Marymount. They came to seek the Lord and to hear His voice.

The day included Mass, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Confession, and two talks presented by me. There was also time for peaceful, quiet walks in the high desert terrain surrounded by snow-capped mountains.

The two talks were entitled "Interior Freedom" and "Freedom, Authority and Obedience". The first presentation was based on "Interior Freedom", a book written by Father Jacques Philippe, a French priest and a member of the Community of the Beatitudes.

The topic of freedom is much on the mind of modern man. It is a legitimate human desire to want to be free. Isaiah proclaimed that the Messiah would come to set the captives free. (See Is. 61:1) Jesus said, "Whoever follows me will know the truth and the truth will set them free." (Jn. 8:32) The world's notion of freedom, however, is quite different than what God reveals about freedom.

Generally, many people of our culture would say that freedom is the license to do whatever one wants to do. It is the freedom to be unhindered in any way from seeking our own desires. A disciple of Jesus, on the other hand, is the one who finds freedom by surrendering to God's will. It is letting go of our own agenda for the sake of God's plan that we experience true freedom. It's a paradox. Jesus said, "Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matt. 16:25)

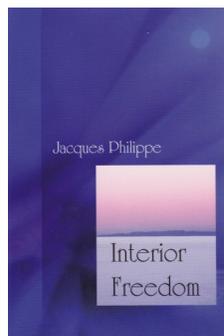
The worldly mentality sees freedom principally as something dependent on external circumstances. A person in prison is not free. A citizen under a repressive government is not free. Someone who is ill or living in poverty is not free. And so on.

A disciple of Jesus finds joy and peace regardless of external circumstances. St. Paul in his letter to the Philippians says, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am." (Phil. 4:11)

Yes, we should be good, responsible citizens in promoting the common good for all. We want to pray and do whatever we can to ensure basic human rights for ourselves and our fellow citizens. But, ultimately, true freedom of spirit comes from a trusting and loving surrender to God's will. This, in a nutshell, is the testimony of the saints.

In his book, Father Philippe summarizes this message:

Every Christian needs to discover that even in the most unfavorable of world circumstances, we possess within ourselves a space for freedom that nobody can take away, because God is its source and guarantee. Without this discovery, we will always be restricted in some way and will never taste true happiness. But if we learn to let this inner space of freedom unfold, then, even though many things may well



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INTERIOR FREEDOM...

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cause us to suffer, nothing will really be able to oppress or crush us.

The second talk for the Day of Pilgrimage is related to the theme of the first talk. People often-times associate authority with a threat to freedom. I think there is a default interior human response that bristles at the thought of authority. We tend to see authority as a restriction of freedom. What does God's Word have to say about this?

The Scriptures encourage us to obey, to respect and to pray for those who have authority in our lives. "Pray for kings and all who are in authority that we may lead tranquil and quiet lives in all godliness and dignity." (1 Tim. 2:2)

This respect and obedience for authority, however, is not absolute. When persons in authority direct us to act in a way that is clearly contrary to God's will, we have a moral imperative to resist. If we are asked to do something that is immoral, we must disobey. In the early days of the Church after Jesus' ascension, the Jewish religious authorities directed the apostles to not speak about Jesus. The apostles responded, "We have to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)

At the Second Vatican Council, the council fathers reminded us about the hierarchical authority that Jesus established for his Church. The bishops throughout the world in union with their head, the Pope, comprise the teaching office of the Church, also known as the Magisterium. We are assured that God will protect and guide his Church until the end of time through these shepherds. The saints throughout the ages speak of how God reveals his will to us through those with legitimate spiritual authority in the Church. Obedience is one of the evangelical counsels. It can also be considered a virtue. Its importance is stressed repeatedly by the saints as a necessary component of growing in holiness. Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton puts it this way: "I know what His will is by those who direct me; whatever they bid me do, if it is ever so small in itself, is the will of God for me."

This has been a very brief summary of the Day of Pilgrimage presentations which I gave on March 26, 2022. The next Day of Pilgrimage, for which I am the presenter, is July 23, 2022. We look forward to hosting any of you pilgrims, who can travel to Marymount Hermitage for these group mini-retreats.

COMMUNITY NEWS

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

Days of Pilgrimage: Father Bill McCann will be the presenter for the Day of Pilgrimage on **July 23, 2022**. Father Dominique, V.S. will be the presenter for the Day of Pilgrimage on **October 15, 2022**. See the **Calendar of Events** on this website for more details.

Hermitage Retreats: The calendar is open to reservations for private, solitary retreats in July and in the fall beginning in early September. Pray and plan now for your days of grace through seeking the Lord in silence and simplicity.

New Installations: The entrance to Marymount has a new mailbox/sign. It is on the opposite side of the road. It indicates the address for emergency vehicles and guests.



It reads: MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE 2150.

Secondly, there are now two new brown roofs on two of the oldest hermitages: Mary's House (building #6) where Father Bill McCann currently resides,



photo at left and House of His Name (building #7) below. Work thanks to McDaddy Construction of Council, Idaho.

The renovation of the interior of St. Francis hermitage (building #1) and installation of a new roof and porch



is currently underway. Prayers for this project would be appreciated. Thank you!

New Road: Ray Groves of Council, ID is grading the new gravel on Hermitage Lane. Help us maintain this road by not speeding and creating washboards.

The MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER is published by Marymount Hermitage, Inc., a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation in the State of Idaho. The Hermit Sisters of Mary are a canonically approved, Catholic community of women hermits, following the Rule of St. Benedict. The newsletter is published each month by the 15th on our website only. The purpose of the newsletter is to share the spirituality and material progress of Marymount Hermitage. Please pray that we may be faithful to our way of life in prayer and penance, solitude and silence for the sake of the Church and the world. Donations are sincerely appreciated and are tax-deductible. Thank you in advance to those who have remembered Marymount Hermitage in their wills. God bless you!