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DOCTORAL THESIS

Life in Christ in the light of authority and moral freedom

- Abstract -

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Abstract

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Life in Christ in the light of authority and moral freedom is the title of this doctoral thesis, result of long-term interrogations and concerns about this subject. The questions without answers became key points in our attempt to shed light on the relation between authority and freedom. The first step we took was to decode the terminology of these two concepts apparently in contradiction: authority and freedom. Once the concepts refined, we were able to understand that moral authority implies freedom and they both harmoniously mix when they responsibly free themselves of constraint.

Displaying authority and expressing freedom can be done in an authentic way when the subject refers to the trinitarian model of working. Paying attention and giving your neighbour priority, rejoicing for his wellbeing and being ready to sacrifice for him out of love are pieces of the faithful image of the man seeking to live the authentic Christian moral life. Thereafter, this morality grows within the grace of God transmitted to the human in and through the Church, the place where the true balance between authority and freedom is kept.

And this is possible based on: (1) the Church sacramental dimension, (2) its synodal organisation and (3) the canonical harmony. When man moves away from God, from the Church and from the community, room is made for abnormal forms of expressing authority and freedom. The man who desires to live his freedom autonomously, as a prodigal son, or the one who tries to substitute for the patriarchal authority end up realising they cannot nurture themselves only from limited resources, accessed in separation with their Creator. While trying to quench this possessive desire, man gets to act upon the freedom of his neighbours through authoritarian tendencies, which lead up to the deterioration of authentic authority.

When the relation between authority and freedom becomes tensioned, it is essential to look for ethical points of reference, in order to restore the natural bond between these divine gifts offered to the human. Under these circumstances, man is invited to regain the moral dimension of authority and of freedom by rediscovering responsibility, deepening the communion with his neighbour and voluntarily establishing boundaries that would keep him away from abnormal tendencies of forcing the will of the people around him.

Offering attention to the other makes us see that the mystery of love implies both authority and freedom. He who loves purely can win anyone's heart, for his unique goal is to constantly do good in order to earn the holiness.