

REFLECTION

Thursday, Tenth Week in Ordinary Time

2 Cor 3: 15-4:1 Matthew 5:20-26

‘Freedom’ is one of the great values of our times. There is so much emphasis on people’s freedom to choose. Saint Paul is making a very striking statement in the first reading today, *‘where the Spirit is, there is freedom’*. Freedom exists where someone is led by Spirit. Those who are open to the Holy Spirit’s influence and guidance are free to live in the way the Lord desires us to live. It means that to be a truly free person your life ought to be shaped by the Spirit. The primary fruit of the Spirit for Paul is love in the sense of self-emptying for the service of others. The truly free person is the person who is free to love in the way Jesus loved. Thus, the more we grow up into the loving person that Jesus was, the freer we are. The more we live out of that deeper virtue that Jesus speaks about in the gospel reading the more we display what Paul calls in his letter to the Romans *‘the glorious freedom of the children of God’*. Paul would say that we will only have that glorious freedom to the full when all is made new, beyond this earthly life. Yet, he would also say that here and now we can begin to taste that glorious freedom of God’s children in so far as we live our lives under the influence of the Lord’s Spirit, the Holy Spirit. Jesus is calling for a disposition that goes deeper than remaining at the face value of the fifth commandment, *‘You shall not kill’* so as to be liberated from the inclinations to anger and name calling. It is only the Spirit who can give us this quality of freedom, the freedom to be virtuous in heart so as to be virtuous in action.