

Sue Rakoczy IHM
SJTI Homily
16 October 2012

Texts: Gal 5:1-6
Luke 11:37-41

Introduction

When can you break a law?

Two vehicles:

Taxi through a red light

Car through a red light

Taxi not stopped. Car stopped. The traffic officer begins to write a ticket; man pleads
“My wife is having a baby.” What should the traffic officer do?

What is the difference?

Martin Luther King Jr—breaking segregation laws in the US

South Africa: Dominican Sisters in the 1970s, breaking apartheid laws by admitting black
students to their schools

Stealing a cell phone left on a table in the library.

What is the difference?

Laws are laws—or are they?

1. Inner and Outer Laws

Paul: The Law—prescriptions of the Law—do not save.

Jesus: Pharisees: outward observances, eg washing, etc---do not save

Externals do not save, including the externals of religious life—a habit, a cross, a ring.

Mind and heart must be engaged and transformed in the Spirit.

2. Putting our trust in externals

What does not save? Anything that is external to faith and love.

Being in chapel but not trying to pray: being there is not enough

Ignoring others’ needs because “I am too busy” with Facebook.

3. What does save?

Paul: “faith that makes its power felt through love”

Jesus: generous love

So faith and love save.

4. Inner Freedom

Augustine: “Love God and do what you will”.

Inner freedom is the key.

5. How are we not free?

John of the Cross: a bird can be tied by a silk thread or a cord—either ties the bird down.

Setting limits:

Missionary congregation but no desire to leave one's own country

Story of Pat McAleese—400 kms re ministry but the Spirit called her to Africa, to Ghana (death in 1996)

6. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (Denis Hurley’s episcopal motto)

Celebrating Vatican II

Blessed John of Rome (John XXIII)—a free person who could trust the Spirit to lead the Church into new life—no need for fear and control

Growing in inner freedom:

Taking away the outer supports so that we choose the right action consistently.

Parents know that their teenage sons and daughters have to learn responsible freedom even if it frightens their parents.

Prayer: inner discipline not external structure.

Ministry: energy to respond to situations, not being “told what to do”

7. Conclusion

True freedom in Christ: faith and love—inner transformation—inner conviction and dynamism—“laws” are obeyed spontaneously

“Love God and do what you will”.