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In Dependance

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In Dependence

Every conscious relationship with God implies a "Declaration of Dependence." For us who find consolation, assurance, and radical support for our way of life in our personal connection with God, there is no contradiction, no opposition, between our freedom of choice and our dependence upon God.

The myth of complete independence as the highest value we can achieve makes for interesting fantasy stories. Novels, movies, plays, and TV programs offer constant variations based on the fiction of individuals prevailing over all human and natural forces that would limit their freedom. Sometimes a partner is included in the triumph over every limiting factor, but interdependence is usually not featured in the stories of powerful victors.

The frequent use of words in the media and everyday conversation such as "democracy," "rights," and "liberty" point not only to a legitimate desire for freedom from coercion in matters of personal life, politics, and religion, but the unrealistic expectations of individuals who each expect to have everything "their own way." God made us for a much fuller life of love that puts us into contact with a variety of persons who differ from us, yet complement us with their gifts. We are at our responsible and realistic best in dependence upon others, not in total self-reliance.

Forced dependence is reprehensible. We rightly become angered at news of any form of active or implied slavery or abuse in which the basic freedom and dignity of humans is diminished by the unjust application of power, whether by a military intervention or a domineering spouse. Although we are completely dependent upon God for life itself, we do not experience coercion in any form. We owe everything to our Creator, but we do not even have to say "thank you" for any and all that we are given. If we acknowledge our dependence upon God for all that we have and are, we do so in complete freedom.

When humans misuse drugs, sex, food, power, or consumer goods, they become dependent in a very negative fashion, relinquishing transcendent internal values for short-term use or possession of external things. As with recovering alcoholics, a proper dependence upon God for strength and motivation leads directly to real freedom, which is *for* others as well as self, rather than freedom *from* everyone or every limitation.

Our healthy need for others, including God, is a gift. We thrive in an environment in which we do not have to have or to be everything all at once. What pleasure we find in the growing exercise of our own personality, talents, and gifts in service to, and in relation with, other people who have different personalities, talents, and gifts that complement ours. A life of appropriate interdependence now, gives us a tiny hint of what we can expect when we move from our "timed" existence to that of timelessness, where sharing with others and God will be our absolute fulfillment.

God did not hold something back in making us interdependent. Our need for one another is a reflection of who God is, wholly interactive in love. The word, "Trinity" is an indicator to us that God, as love, is interpersonal. We, who are created in the image and likeness of God, find in our experience that life is composed primarily of relationships, not the gathering of objects or power.

Though we have need to honestly and carefully choose the practical details of all our interactions with friends and enemies, family members and strangers, people close and distant, we will find our fulfillment in dependence, rather than in selfish independence.