

The Church has a way of reasoning about Divine things. She draws from the wellspring of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Within her Tradition, the rites and texts of the Church say something about what we believe. Bearing this in mind I would like to draw your attention to the opening prayer of the Mass, otherwise known as the ‘collect’:

*“O God, from whom all good things come, grant that we, who call on you in our need, may at your prompting discern what is right, and by your guidance do it. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.”*

What can we gather from this?

First, if God is the Author of all that is good, indeed He is Goodness itself, and therefore nothing that He does is bad, then it follows that His guidance and His promptings always lead to that which is most good. In fact, His guidance and promptings necessarily lead to Him, to an “eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (cf 2 Cor 4:17). God’s guidance and promptings are identical with His Will. Jesus says that those who do the will of God are not mere bystanders or much less strangers or servants to the Divine but are participants in His family, a family that infinitely transcends our ordinary relations of flesh and blood that we have with our families. Notice, that any family is generated from and consists of two actions: first, knowing each other and then the love which proceeds from that knowledge. If we are siblings of Jesus that means we are able to know and love the Divine Persons of the Trinity. This fact is something that no creature could attain to, much less imagine, on its own; not even the angels with their superior intellects could. Thus, the purpose of our freedom. Freedom is a power to order one’s being towards God who is our perfective end or goal. From this we should begin to see that God’s Will is never in competition with our freedom, nor is His will opposed to the ultimate desire of ours – Happiness. So, to be free means to say to God, ‘Thy Will be done’ so that His promptings and guidance inform our minds and hearts and lead us to Him.

Second, the *Collect* tells us that to attain to this final goal of intimacy with God we need Divine assistance. Thus, rightly to use our freedom we need God. On our own, we are incapable from the start because there is an infinite chasm between the Uncreated and the created. Moreover, without God, we cannot discern what is perfective, nor do that which perfects us (in other words get to Heaven). Just look at Adam and Eve before the Fall. Without the burden of sin in their prelapsarian state, Adam and Eve were innocent, close to God (not the same kind of closeness that the Saints in Heaven experience), free, and wise. Yet, they rejected God’s prompting to know what was right and His guidance or help to carry it out. But with God’s help or ‘grace’ and by the use of our freedom to cooperate with that grace we can, with a sure and certain hope, look forward to a life of intimacy with God that begins now and is consummated in Heaven.