

Love's True Freedom

'Jesus' crucified flesh reveals the bond between truth and freedom, just as His resurrection exalts the fruitfulness of a freedom lived out in truth.' St. John Paul II

We live in a noisy, confusing world of sexual 'freedom.' From Hillary Clinton lamenting Indiana's religious freedom bill on the grounds that it fetters 'gay love' to the Supreme Court insisting that feds cover a prisoner's gender reassignment costs, we are now subject to a new vision of human freedom that excludes any hint of God. Might the Creator and Redeemer of our humanity know something about true freedom?

No stranger to sexual indignities, Mary Magdalene discovered freedom at the Source. Jesus gave Himself to a woman traditionally believed to be driven by disordered desires and demonized by a culture intent on exploiting such women. Unafraid of her impurity, Jesus offered Mary almighty mercy. He became her refuge and gave her a place alongside of Him. Jesus' powerful Presence in her life delivered Mary from seven demons (LK 8: 2). 'He did not hand her over to the enemy but set her feet in a spacious place' (PS 31:8).

Divine love broke the low ceiling over Mary's life and gave her inspired options. Love alone restored Mary's human freedom. In love Jesus created her; in love He reclaimed her dignity. She was tempted otherwise, perhaps not unlike a woman today so wearied by broken men that she opens to the affections of another woman or eschews her womanhood altogether.

Jesus rescued her from any number of futile solutions. That's what real love does: it shames the strong who currently champion any number of civil liberties as the best option for the sexually broken. Will Christians do better than legally securing others in a futile, disordered destiny? We need to impart a quality of love to disordered ones that corresponds to the real ache, the true aspirations of our ailing humanity.

Mary chose the dignity of love that Jesus alone offers. Love became her freedom. And she gave herself freely to His purposes. Do you marvel that Jesus chose her--a formerly demonized, scorned woman--from among all the disciples to deliver the message of resurrection? The freedom of her new life became the glorious vehicle through which all of humanity can say: 'I have seen the Lord!' (JN 20:18)