

Year 2025

Course: Recognising oneself
The Statutes: a path and a mirror

Saturday, 12th April, 2025

Summary of the Lesson 4A

Tommaso Bertolasi

“Rules and freedom”

Freedom

- Paradox of absolute freedom:
 - Multiplicity of options (metaphor of a buffet): freedom like "liquid modernity" (Baumann).
 - Definite choices exclude infinite possibilities.
 - Unlimited freedom = anxiety (Baumann).
 - Biblical example: "you will be like God" (Genesis 3:5).
- Limitations and freedom:
 - Limitations (body, language, place, relationships) give a structure to our identity.
 - Choosing is the only way to achieve freedom.
 - Absence of choices = death of freedom.

2. The Rule

- Rules as an expression of freedom:
 - Habits and social styles.
 - Justice: guarantee what is specific to a society (rights).
 - Law: description of a right, not a limitation to freedom.
 - Laws change according to how knowledge evolves
- Rules and love:
 - In religious institutions, the law is founded on love (Deuteronomy, Leviticus).
 - Love as a free action: paradox and fragility.
 - Love and justice are inseparable.

3. The Focolare Movement

- Statute based on mutual love:
 - Fragility: requires a "symphony of freedom and gratuity".
 - Mutual love as the premise of every rule.
 - Without love, rules lose meaning.
- Freedom and Jesus Forsaken:
 - The only way to love: giving of ourselves to others.
 - Through the "non-God" (sufferings, division, etc.).
 - Witness of Love through life and love.

4. Advice to Adults

- Live mutual love:
 - Take the premise of the Statutes seriously.
 - Let the love that is present live in us.
 - Witness the joy of the Gospel.
 - Love, starting from Jesus Forsaken.