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FROM THE LOGIC OF LOVE TO THE LOGIC OF FREEDOM: ST JOSEPH – AN ICON OF PERFECT CHARITY

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Abstract

"The logic of love is always the logic of freedom" (*Patris Corde*, 7). For, as St John in his Epistle (I Jn 4:18) testifies, "[…] perfect love casts out fear." Love, freed from fear, dares for what is seemingly impossible. The very life of St Joseph is an epitome of what Pope Francis calls "creative courage" and "love with extraordinary freedom." This extraordinary courage and freedom dared St. Joseph, on the one hand, to recognize 'the not-yet' dimensions of the loving relationship with Mama Mary and Child Jesus, and, on the other, to accept the unknown risks in their future course of life. With authentic freedom, St. Joseph said 'fiat' to God's will, as revealed to him in the Law (Lk 2:22.27.39) and through the dreams (Mt 1:20; 2:13.19.22). He could, therefore, own the responsibilities of his decisions and bear the consequences of his actions. Thus St Joseph proved himself a "just man" who could transcend the "norms of right order" (justice), and serve Mary and Jesus with "extraordinary freedom" derived from "the logic of love."

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Introduction

"Let those who make profession of the evangelical counsels, seek and love, above all else, God who has first loved us (1 Jn 4:10). […] This love of God both excites and energizes that love of one's neighbour, which contributes to the salvation of the world and the building up of the Church. This love, in addition, quickens and directs the actual practice of the evangelical counsels." [1]

St Joseph is, for all followers of Christ, the preeminent model of the interior life—the life of continual mindfulness of Divine Love and God's abiding presence in every moment of our lives. For those in consecrated life, St Joseph is a living rule by which we can measure our own fidelity and authenticity to be better conformed to the ideal of "perfection of charity in the service of the Kingdom" (CCC, 219).[2]

Part I: The Logic of Love

"What is love?" asks Plotinus in *Enneads*, "A God, a Celestial Spirit, a state of mind? Or is it sometimes to be thought of as a God or Spirit, and sometimes merely as an experience?"[3] What is love? An answer to this question is not easy as it seems to be, simply because of the various semantic usages and implications of the term "love." Moreover, it seems impossible limiting the scope of such a broad concept as "love." In the *Symposium*, Plato rightly recognizes the difficulty in defining love, when he says: "Love has many […] objects and many subjects, […] and I think I may say in the every form of existence – so great, so wonderful, and so all-embracing is the power of Love in every activity, whether sacred or profane."[4] Such an all embracing power as love has too many important and legitimate meanings over and above its popular meanings.

As Plotinus suggests, his three answers can be usually reduced to two: love as a superhuman power ("God or Spirit"), or as "a human

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[1]Vatican II, *Perfectae Caritatis*, in Walter M. Abbot, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II*, USA: The American Press, 1966, Art, 6.

[2]Cf. Mary Joseph Calore, SSCJ, "St Joseph: Model for Consecrated Persons," https://catholicexchange.com/st-joseph-model-for-consecrated-persons; Retrieved 10 October 2021.

[3]Plotinus, *The Enneads*, trans. Stpehen MacKenna, London: Faber and Faber, 1957, 191.

[4]Plato, *Symposium*, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed., E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973, 186a-b.

experience." Though Plotinus presents them disjunctively, his alternatives may seem unwarranted, if not impossible, to keep them distinct. For example, E.H. Gombrich has argued that in modern times "no real distinction can be made between the gods conceived as demonic beings and their role as personifications or metaphors.[5] All the same, there is a danger in the collapse of the distinction between love as "God" and love as "merely human experience. In Chaucer and Seneca, we find extreme narratives or views on love. Chaucer's Troilus illustrates the danger of attributing one's own passion to the Love "that of earth and sea hath governance,"[6] whereas Seneca goes to the extent of denying the divinity of love altogether. For him, love is only a *vis magna mentis*, which humans have personified and imagined to be a god.[7] These extreme positions could render the Biblical vision of God as love unintelligible, a vision clearly articulated from, and confirmed by, the "lived experience" of thousands of men and women down through the centuries. According to Charles Hartshorne, "a magnificent intellectual content […] is implicit in the religious faith most briefly expressed in the three words, 'God is love'."[8]

The key metaphor, "God is love", is essentially biblical, although we could also find similar statements in the scriptures of other religions. It is John the Apostle, who wrote probably the greatest single statement about God in the whole Bible, "God is love" (I Jn 4:8). In other words, God is the source of love, and all love, therefore, originates from God. Moreover, he argues that we ought to love God, because God has first loved us (I Jn 4:10), and the love of God is made manifest in and through the love our fellow-beings. For, "those who say 'I love God' and hate his brothers and sisters are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister - whom they have seen, cannot love God - whom they have not seen" (I Jn 4.20-21). That is why Theresa of Avila wrote: "I think the most certain sign that we keep these two commandments is that we have a genuine love for others. We cannot know whether we love God although there may be strong reasons for thinking so, but there can be no doubt about whether we love our

[5]E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, London: Phaidon, 1972, 127.

[6]Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F.N. Robinson, London: Oxford University Press, 1966, Line 1744.

[7]Seneca, *Octavia in Tragedies*, trans. Franck Miller, London: Putnam's, 1917, Lines 561-562.

[8]Charles Hartshorne, *Man's Vision of God and the Logic of Theism*, Hamden: Archon Books, 1964, ix.

neighbour or not."[9] Thus, Love has a double relationship to God: Love comes from God and love leads to God; that is, God is both the 'subject' of love and 'object' of love.

An Analysis of Love

Thinkers, like Vincent Brümmer and John Macmurray, distinguish in theory three types of love relationship among people: (i) manipulative relations, (ii) agreements of rights and duties, and (iii) mutual fellowship.[10] However, viewed from the dynamics of relationships, love can be conceived as two-fold: (i) I love someone (other) for myself, and (ii) I love someone (other) for the other. I love someone (other) for my gratification, satisfaction, realization and for my unification with the other. This kind of love may take the form of possessive, manipulative or romantic love. First, its possessive love, when one owns the other, as well depicted in D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. "A possessive love ultimately becomes dangerous: it imprisons, constricts and makes for misery," so says Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter, *Patris Corde*.[11] Second, its manipulative love, when one makes use of the other for one's petty interests, as envisaged by David Hume's *Commonwealth*. In the first part of *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes, for example, provides a perfect analysis of the society in the mode of manipulative relations. According to him every human being is to her/himself an independent world living in circumstances of radical uncertainty, caused by what he calls: "First, Competition; Second, Diffidence; and Thirdly, Glory."[12] Each isolated individual, therefore, uses all her/his powers to secure one's own satisfaction and to preserve one's own life; and the consequence is state of war, "where every man is an enemy to every man," and where the life of wo/man would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."[13] Third, its romantic love, when one loves the other for love's sake. In fact, classic stories, like *The Iliad* or *Romeo and Juliet*, weren't celebrations of love; but they were warnings of how romantic love can potentially ruin everything. In short, all these forms of manipulative relations, where one loves the other for oneself, in the strict sense, are not love at all.

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[9]Theresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, New York: Dover Publications, 2007, 143.

[10]Vincent Brümmer, *The Model of Love*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 156-173; John Macmurray, *Persons in Relation*, London: Faber and Faber, 1961, 127F.

[11]Pope Francis, *Patris Corde*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2020, Art. 9.

[12]Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, London: Everyman's Library, 1976, 63-64.

[13]Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 64-65.

Secondly, I love someone (other) for the other. To love somebody means 'necessarily to forget myself'; and if I don't forget myself, I do not love the other. But I can't choose to forget myself, when I love the other. So long as the 'forgetting of myself' is an act of the ego, I remain involved with 'myself'. Therefore, to forget myself in the love of the other is not that I can realize. Hence I need the other as a means for forgetting myself. But, we don't relate to the other as "means" but as a 'person'. For example, Immanuel Kant, in what is often called the "Formula of Humanity," states: "So act that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means."[14]

Love of the other for the other could further be explored both from the intellectual perspective and voluntarism. In the first case, I love the other because my will, my desire, is moved by reasons. For example, I love [x] (Mary) because she is [so] and [so], and has the following properties, like beautiful, rich, etc., and my will is moved by these reasons. However, my intellectual grounds for my love for the other meet with several difficulties. First, my love for the other would remain necessarily limited, for it is depended on reasons. Second, it hardly explains why I love that specific individual [x], not a perfect [xx]. Third, it would also imply that I have to love other persons, if they have the same properties, which I found in [x].

On the grounds of voluntarism, we can argue that my will, desire, is moved by [x] Mary, without any reasons. There are several advantages of such unconditional love as love without reasons. First, it recognizes the basic capacity of our love: I can say 'who' I love, but not 'why' I love. Second, it can also describe the irreplaceable and singular value of a person, or object of love. Third, it can explain, why in certain sense, love can be infinite or not limited. However, such unconditional love encounters certain difficulties, such as the person [x] can hardly accept that I love [x], as I fail to give reasons for that love. Moreover, my explanation that "I love you for your singularity, and not for your characteristics," will be rejected on the ground that 'You can love someone other as well, for it doesn't matter who you love'. In short, the anonymous state of love is not acceptable.

Our analysis of love would reveal that the logic has to hide the 'groundness' of love and capacity to love. The more we learn about love, the more preposterous and mysterious it is likely to appear. In

[14]Immanuel Kant, *Kants Gesammelte Schriften, ed.*, Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1900, 429.

our deepest hearts, most of us hope that love will never fully yield up its secrets, that it will always elude our grasp. However, a survey of secular and religious literature indicates the dynamic and relational character of love. Hartshorne, for example, describes love in terms of relational or "shared experience." He writes: "Love is a participation in the lives of the others, both humble and exalted. Love […] is feeling of feeling, willing of willing, and consciousness of consciousness." [15] The reference to 'feeling', 'willing' and 'consciousness' reflects many dimensions of human life that are involved in the dynamics of love. It implies a total commitment, involving affective, conative and cognitive aspects of human life to the object of love. Just as in human love, the divine love also calls forth a total response to the object of love, namely, God: "Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength and all your mind" (Lk 10:27).

Part II. The Logic of Freedom

"The logic of love is always the logic of freedom," states Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde*.[16] Love, whether human or divine, is "a type of personal relation between two individuals, who recognize the freedom and responsibility of each other."[17] According to Aristotle, in love relationships, the partners, though they remain 'independent centres of activity', commit themselves to the other unconditionally. But this unconditional love relationship can take place, only if each partner *freely* offers her/himself to the other. Hence, as Hartshorne points out, love involves a dynamics "not of mere power, [but] of human freedom."[18] In other words, love means "letting be, a respect for the otherness, freedom and individuality of the beloved."[19] We can present some arguments in order to explicate the logic and nature of the necessity of freedom.[20]

First, to love is to involve oneself in the history of the other, affirming and accepting her/his freedom. The "not-yet" dimension is

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[15]Charles Hartshorne, "Love and Light" (Unpublished), Sermon in the Federated Theological Schools, Bond Chapel, 1950, 2.

[16]Pope Francis, *Patris Corde*, Art 7.

[17]Kurian Kachappilly, *God of Love: A Neoclassical Enquiry*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2002, 46.

[18]Charles Hartshorne, *Philosophers Speak of God*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953, 110.

[19]John Macquarrie, *In Search of Humanity*, London: SCM Press, 1982, 180.

[20]Here I follow the line of arguments, which I have developed in my book, Kurian Kachappilly, *God of Love: A Neoclassical Enquiry*, 50-53.

a significant element in the dynamics of love. The future course of life, which is unknown in its concreteness, holds its own risks, including the risk of death.[21] Freedom consists in the way we handle and manage the risks: "They may be assumed and faced, or they may be denied and repressed."[22] Unless there is the 'will' to assume the demands and risks in the love relationship, the partners cannot give themselves to the other fully and completely. The risk we need to take in love is greater than that involved in other relationships, because in love what is at stake is the very value of the partners as persons.

Second, not only does the future course of life offer unknown risks, but also the other with her/his decisions about the future. On the one hand, as humans, our identity is not immutably stable and we may change in the course of time in the ways, which make it difficult to maintain our relationship with integrity. On the other hand, the circumstances of our lives could give rise to changes, which make it difficult for us to continue to identify with each other. However, changes either in their personal identity or circumstances of their lives need not necessarily result in partners growing apart. If lovers respond to changing circumstances in ways, which are compatible, they could grow and develop together in accordance with the changing situations. In this respect, a relationship of love becomes a joint venture, which can only be maintained to the extent that both partners commit themselves in mutual freedom. Neither the lover nor the beloved can, therefore, coerce or oblige the other to remain faithful without perverting the relationship into anything other than love. Kant rightly makes this point clear, when he states that "love cannot be commanded."[23] Every effort to force or command the lover, betrays the love and the lover. Hence, as William Desmond argues, "there can be no technique of love, through technique may produce the simulacrum of love. It will work on the surface of intimacy, but

[21] Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans., John Macquarrie, New York: Harper, 1962, 296-99.

[22] Daniel Williams, *The Spirit and Forms of Love*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1981, 116.

[23] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. T.K. Abbott, London: Longmans, 1923, 176.

already this signals the death of intimacy."[24] Lovers, therefore, "give each other everything freely, under no compulsion of necessity."[25]

Third, it is natural to anticipate a reward for any effort expended. That is one of the reasons why Aristotle prefers 'loving' to 'being loved', since he thinks that "he who loves is inclined to benefit, just in so far as he loves."[26] Indeed, you love the other in the hope that your love will produce love in the other. Yet, you cannot demand or insist that someone you love should love you back. For, love –true and genuine- is given either without demands or assurance of being loved. As Eric Fromm views it, "love means to commit oneself without guarantee."[27] If you love truly someone, then you have no choice but to believe and trust that your love would be returned. Nonetheless, love excludes complete predestination, which is detrimental to the very idea and meaning of love. It implies that love is a personal response of the will to the freedom of the other to do as s/he wills. Gandhi captures this idea clearly, when he says: "There is no love where there is no [free] will."[28]

Limits of Freedom

Freedom, through a necessary condition of love, is not absolute, for the elements of arbitrariness and accidents enter into any love relationship. A.G. Gardiner, in his essay "The Rule of the Road" points out what constitutes the true liberty/freedom. Presenting an example of an old lady, who insisted on walking in the middle of the road in Petrograd instead of on the pavement, he defines the "rule of the road" in the following way: "In order that the liberties of all may be preserved, the liberties of everybody must be curtailed."[29] In other words, each person must have some limits on his or her freedom in order to enjoy a social order that makes liberty a reality because liberty is not only a personal affair but also a social contract. Love, which is a mode of mutual relationship, is qualified by the physical,

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[24]William Desmond, *Perplexity and Ultimacy*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, 91.

[25]Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1941, 74.

[26]Aristotle, *Magna Moralia*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed., Jonathan Barnes, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984, 1210b, 10.

[27]Eric Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, New York: Random House, 1956, 57.

[28]Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works*, New Delhi: Motilal Publications, 1964, Vol. 3, 231.

[29]A.G. Gardiner, "The Rule of the Road," in *Leaves in the Wind*, Glasgow: Good Books, 1919, 45.

emotional, and historical circumstances in which love exists. The success of love depends on the ability to grow in freedom, recognizing the realities, and keeping the integrity/authenticity of the self.

According to Jean Paul Sartre, "[hu]man is condemned to be free;"[30] but the only idea recognized by his freedom is that of making choices in an authentic spirit. The exercise of authentic freedom educes twofold responsibility: responsibility for the self and responsibility for the other.[31] First, self-responsibility implies lucidity about the total responsibility for the ends s/he proposes and the means s/he takes. In other words, individuals, as free beings, are responsible for all elements of themselves, their consciousness, and their actions. This also implies that he must bear the consequences of his actions. This theme was explored by Dostoyevsky in the "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" in *The Brothers Karamasov*. Second, added to this is the responsibility for the other, namely "in choosing for oneself, one must also choose for all other selves." For, each choice that I make creates a possible standard, which others in similar situation are totally invited to follow. That is, with total freedom comes total responsibility. George Bernard Shaw expressed this succinctly: "Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it."[32]

The burden of making choices in freedom every moment is all the more terrifying, when we realize that in each particular choice we make, we are implicating someone or other, or the whole humankind. So terrifying are the responsibilities of freedom, so relentless and so exhausting are its demands that humans seek to abdicate, or pretend that they are not free. All this Sartre terms as "bad faith"[33] and this is the Sartrean equivalent of "inauthenticity." Sartre is very critical of those who hide, either with full intent or by pleas of determinism, their total liberty, and those who try to show that what they are is by

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[30]Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, trans. Philip Mairet, London: Methuen, 1948, 34.

[31]Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, 29: "And when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men."

[32]George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman: Maxims for Revolutionaries*, London: 1903, 61.

[33]Jean Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes, London: Routledge, 1991, 47ff.

necessity.[34] Unlike many people, who adopt the façade of 'bad faith' in order to escape the anguish of boundless freedom, Saint Joseph, the just man, exercised his total freedom with responsibility, empowered by perfect charity (*perfectae caritatis*).

Part III. Saint Joseph: An Icon of Perfect Charity/Love

In fact, apart from a few verses in the Gospels, little is mentioned in the Bible about Joseph. All we know about Joseph from the Bible is that he was a descendant of David, a carpenter or builder in Nazareth, who became the husband of Mary and thus the adoptive father of Jesus. St. Matthew tells us that Joseph was "a just man," an upright man. He was, therefore, "unwilling to expose her [Mary] to public disgrace" and so "planned to dismiss her quietly" (Mt 1:19).

The Gospel of Matthew portrays Joseph as "a just man." Justice is generally defined as "*Suum cuique tradere*—"to render to each one's due."[35] In fact early theories of justice were set out by the ancient Greek philosophers, Plato in his work the *Republic* and Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Plato defines justice as "the having and doing of what is one's own." And a just man is "a man in just the right place, doing his best and giving the precise equivalent of what he has received."[36] Moreover, for Plato, "justice is the fundamental virtue, mother of the virtues […]. For the intelligence it consists in the correctness of thought; for the will, in courage for the sensibility, in temperance. Wisdom is the justice of the mind; courage, the justice of the heart; temperance, the justice of the senses."[37] Justice, to Aristotle as to Plato, is virtue in action. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle distinguishes between justice as the whole of virtue (general, legal justice), and justice as a particular part of virtue (including commutative justice and distributive justice.)[38] St. Thomas Aquinas,

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[34]Jean Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Human Emotions, New York: Philosophical Library, 1957, 46: "Those who hide their complete freedom from themselves out of a spirit of seriousness or by means of deterministic excuses, I shall call cowards; those who try to show that their existence was necessary, when it is the very contingency of man's appearance on earth, I shall call stinkers."

[35]Cf. *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ed., Joseph A. Komonchak, Bangalore: TPI, 1996, 549.

[36]Plato, *Republic* trans. Robin Waterfield, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, Book I, 331, b-c.

[37]Plato, *Republic*, Book I, 331, b-c.

[38]Cf. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, trans. Hippocrats G. Apostle, London: Redial Publishing, London, 1980, Book E, 5.

embracing these distinctions of Aristotle, defines the virtue of justice as "the strong and firm will to give to each his due."[39]

General or legal justice is that which sets out the overall ordering, or norms, which ought to govern social behaviour. Pope Pius XI called them, in his Encyclical Letter, *Quadragesimo Anno*, the "norms of right order,"[40] because the word "legal" narrows this justice to positive laws, what are written on the books. If Joseph had followed the legal justice, he would have insisted on the enforcement of the law, where it is expressly ordered that a betrothed woman, if she lay with other man, should be stoned (Deut 22: 23), or publically break off the marriage, though she had not been stoned, on the violation of the faith of their espousals before the marriage was completed. But the Gospel testifies that "Joseph, being a just man," […] planned to dismiss her quietly." If Joseph, a strict observer of the law and the customs of his ancestors, was "unwilling to expose her to public disgrace," it was indicative of another or even an opposite meaning of the word "just" in the Biblical literature.

In the Biblical tradition, justice is identified with the nature of God (Isa 30:18) as well as with God's activity (Gen 18:15). Humans fulfil their purpose on earth by acting in accordance with God's decrees in a way that makes them imitate the divine nature and activity (Deut 16:20.) Thus "the human response to God's justice is to observe the will of God in a way that pleases God."[41] Indeed St. Joseph said "fiat" to God's will, when he went through various hardships during his lifetime: the confusion about what to do with St. Mary, when she was found pregnant (Mt 1: 18); the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in accordance with the Roman decree that all people be "registered, everyone to his own city" (Lk 2:3) with his expectant wife; and the realization that his son's life was at risk because of King Herod and his "flight to Egypt" by night (Mt 2: 13-14). St. Joseph also shared with Mary the anxiety, when the twelve-year-old Jesus was found missing in Jerusalem, at the Feast of the Passover, and was later found in the temple preaching to the scholars (Lk 2:41-50).

The Bible often treats 'justice' as a kind of 'summary' of all virtues (Cf. Ezek 18: 5 ff). And justice, as the summary of all the virtues, is

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[39]Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, trans. Blackfriars, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970, II.II, 58, 1.

[40]Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1931, Art. 101.

[41]*The New Dictionary of Catholic Spiritualty*, ed., Michael Downey, Bangalore: TPI, 1995, 581.

often described in more explicitly religious terms, like '*righteousness*', '*holiness*' or, '*love*'. God alone is just, because God alone is righteous, holy, and perfect love. As a virtue, just like all other cardinal virtues, justice is shaped and directed by love/charity. The ground of justice as well as its goal is love of God and neighbour. "For a Christian, love of neighbour and justice cannot be separated. For love implies the absolute demand for justice, recognition of dignity and rights of one's neighbour."[42]

Finally, among the virtues, love is assigned primacy: "And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (I Cor 13:13). Love informs all other virtues, lives in them, and transforms justice from within. More fundamentally, doing of justice stems from the fundamental option for God, who wants us to love others as God loves them, and out of this love to give them full due in the community of social living. Moreover, there can be charitable acts congenial to, if not absolutely required by, social living that goes beyond the call of justice. St. Joseph's decision "to dismiss her [Mary] quietly" and thus settle the matter with a 'writ of divorcement', which was necessary for the betrothed as for those who were fully man and wife, was an act of pure charity. As Pope Francis testifies, "The nobility of Joseph's heart is such that what he learned from the law he made dependent on charity."[43] Yes, St Joseph served Mary and Jesus "with extraordinary freedom," derived from the "logic of love."[44]

Conclusion

Calling Joseph a 'just man', then, is so much more than his observance of Jewish laws and practices of his ancestors. Joseph was in fact a man of "righteousness" and "justice," being attuned to the right things and actually doing them. For St Joseph, as the king Alfred the Great suggested, "to be governed by righteousness is to be in the highest freedom." The Christian idea of freedom also implies the expectation that a truly free person will live fully the commandment of love. As Saint Augustine said, "Love God and do what you want." For, as Bernard Häring puts it, "love is the foundation of ordered relations, and justice (right order) is the way to

[42]*The New Dictionary of Theology*, 549.
[43]Pope Francis, *Patris Corde*, Art. 5.
[44]Pope Francis, *Patris Corde*, Art. 9.

love."[45] Indeed St. Joseph loved God and did everything right for Jesus and Mary.

*Ite ad Ioseph (*Go to Joseph), for he is, par excellence, the "wise and faithful servant whom the Lord put in charge of his household (Lk 12:42). *Ite ad Ioseph*, for he is, par excellence, the "most chaste" father, who "did not think of himself, but focused on the lives of Jesus and Mary and found his happiness not in mere self-sacrifice but in self-gift" (PC, 9). *Ite ad Ioseph*, for he is, par excellence, the "lover of poverty," who demonstrated time and again the freedom of leaving all in the providence of God in order to live fully in the presence of Jesus. *Ite ad Ioseph*, for he is, par excellence, the "obedient father" (PC, 4), who declared his own "fiat", like those of Jesus and Mary, and conformed his actions to the holy will of God, and in so doing became fully blessed. Let us consecrate ourselves to St. Joseph's fatherly care and protection, so that we can open ourselves to receive his help to grow in our vocation, in our chaste love, spiritual poverty and trusting obedience.

[45]Bernard Häring, *Free and Faithful in Christ*, New York: Seabury Press, 1978, 471.