



FREEDOM IN CHAINS

Kathlyn Q. Barrozo
Class of 1991, University of Santo Tomas
B.S. Medical Technology

Freedom can be defined by the abundance of opportunities either for self-realization or some other purpose. Freedom is having a choice. However, in the society we live in, the options are dictated by need more than by any other consideration. We make our choices based on the options that we have, not on the desires we do have. However, looking at everything closely, we often have desires that are too constrictive to ever present us with options that we have difficulty deciding on. It's sort of a quandary between damned-if-you-do and damned-if-you-don't. Every so often, we get ourselves imprisoned by the choices we make.

Many times, I have often considered myself in such a state. Forever searching, forever bound by my personal goals. I try to be more forgiving to myself but often fail. This fast-paced world has so pervaded my way of thinking that I feel so boxed in. I don't forgive myself so easily, sometimes ruminating on the consequences of taking the other fork in the road. And believe me, with the number of crossroads I've been through, I have often found myself going around in circles. Funny huh? To end up right where you started is silly, but that has happened to me so many times.

Had it not been for my faith, I might have lost my handle on life a very long time ago. Whenever I feel so imprisoned, deep in doubt or high on the angst but low on the energizing hope, I give myself a firm reality check. It's not all that easy. Sometimes, I look to my own mother and my kids for inspiration. They, after all, have stuck it out with me all these years and have never given up on me. Why should I give up on life?

And most importantly, I look upon the cross. It is the cross that symbolizes man's bondage to sin and evil and that One Man decided to carry for all mankind. The Great Man who had lain helplessly nailed to the cross had one brief moment of desperation and fear, but knowing how His sufferings would soon end, He embraced the cross when it was cruelly placed on His shoulders. He freely gave up His own life so that we may live. I believe the freedom He experienced after He decided to let His Father work in him was the most liberating experience one can ever have. Painful it might have all been, but the experience of this One Man should inspire us to carry our crosses willingly and without shame.

It is our always own crosses that set us free.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How do you personally define freedom?
2. Is absolute freedom attainable? How?
3. How do we become slaves to our own desires? Be as specific as needed.
4. What makes you feel enslaved in life?
5. If you could freely choose how to live your life, how would you do it?