18. November 2026
ASPECTS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE
Part III
"Radiant Obedience"

If, by God's grace, we have set out on the path of following the Lord and have accepted His loving invitation, then it is essential for our true progress on this path to learn and practice true obedience. As the meaning of the word suggests, obedience has to do with hearing, more precisely, with listening attentively, paying attention, hearing carefully, and understanding correctly. It is therefore a matter of wanting to hear the Lord's instructions and learning to understand them, to the extent that we are able.

However, obedience is often misunderstood, and some even believe they are giving up their freedom when they do not live self-determined lives. But we must realize that listening to God is a prerequisite for our lives to unfold according to His will and thus lead to true freedom! We must awaken from the illusion that we humans can find the path and true happiness on our own, and also from the false view that obedience is some kind of burden we must bear. It certainly is not. Without it, our lives would inevitably become confused.

Right at the beginning of God's history with His people Israel, the Lord had Moses proclaim: *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord."* (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Our obedience is first and foremost owed to God, who created us, for human beings do not draw the deepest wisdom from within themselves. On the contrary! Without God's help, they cannot attain their true purpose in life. God has told them what is good and what is evil, and they are called to choose what is good. Therefore, in order to shape their life in accordance with God's creative will, people need God's guidance and direction. They need the Holy Spirit to truly know God and to accomplish what God has ordained for them.

This should go without saying for all those who have set out on the path of following Christ. Yet it is important to keep this in mind time and again in order to find the right attitude toward obedience. The admonitions from Sacred Scripture may serve as a guide

here, for even people who already believe are in danger of not listening to God deeply enough.

True listening is not merely superficial hearing, which seeks only to hear what pleases one and blocks out everything else. Jesus laments such an attitude! Time and again in the Old Testament, we hear God lamenting the "deafness" of His people. In such cases, the will of those who hear is not directed toward what is right: they do not want to hear, they do not incline their ear, and therefore they do not come to understand! (cf. Proverbs 2:1–4)

St. Paul even speaks of times when people do not want to hear sound doctrine, but only *"what their itching ears want to hear"*, in other words, what pleases them (cf. 2 Tim 4:3).

Often, this is based on a false conviction, or, better yet, a false image of God.

The correct view of God, however, as our loving Father, opens the way for us to a free and radiant obedience. It is then not merely an act of the will to which we feel bound. Rather, it becomes a quest of the mind and heart to be in complete harmony with our Father; it becomes an immersion in His purposes for us and the world; it is a sincere effort to attain complete alignment with truth and love. Obedience becomes a matter of the heart, and the will of God becomes the "food" of which Jesus speaks.

The joyful fulfillment of God's will guarantees human freedom. It breaks the chains of self-bondage, the fixation on one's own ego, and the disorderly attachment to the world and to people.

Obedience makes the path of following Christ more agile and allows the Spirit of God to accomplish His work in us more and more. It is precisely obedience that leads to great spiritual vigilance, not merely by moving within the generally recognized will of God, but by seeking and discerning God's will with ever greater subtlety in our current life situation! Here the Spirit of Counsel comes to our aid.

Growing and maturing obedience makes it easy for us to recognize and do the will of God. We recognize it through the eyes of love. We grasp the ever-present, never-wavering intentions of His love and desire to serve them. The soul is no longer consumed by fears, as if the Father's will could have planned something that is not

desirable for us or even threatening. Even when the meaning of God's will is not immediately clear to us, obedience draws upon our deepened trust to follow the Lord even in the darkness.

To put it simply, we can adapt a passage from Psalm 42 to apply it to "radiant obedience": *"As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God…"* (Psalm 42:1–2)

Or we can also imitate the obedience of the angels, who gladly and completely carry out God's will!

Meditation on the reading of the day in the Novus Ordo:
https://en.elijamission.net/holy-reverence-3/