

THE BACK OF THE BULLETIN

“I Know What I Want!”

A good thing to be able to claim, whatever it may be; it is one of the aims of a human life to be able to say that with conviction. We like to think that we live free lives, able and willing to make choices. But this isn't everything. From such roots you might build up a picture of humanity that is self-centred - whose proudest boast is expressed in that ironic modern habit of playing coffins into crematoria to the tape of F. Sinatra singing *I Did It My Way*.

You Did Not Choose Me

The truth is different. As to our very existence we did not do the choosing. We have a Creator *who chose us*; this fact is much more important than any subsequent choice we could make. So our first leap in the womb is an *obedient* one, and so is our first breath, and every subsequent one, up to the very last. This thought is profoundly different from the one that sees life as a story of assuming greater and greater autonomy and freedom; obsession with freedom can lead people to do quite perverse things, where obedience to a Creator leads to the search to resemble the God who called us, and before whom we live. In this obedience there is room for prayer and struggle, loss and gain, pain and joy. It's not a narrow, empty, or blinkered life. But nor is it lacking in direction or in real relationship. A life lived with God is not a lonely one - can never be so. God wants us to be united, to be a family, with no-one left out. Also we can thankfully say that if anyone wants to quarrel with our being, they will have to apply to higher authority; we are the work of God, and any complaints must go to him. What a relief!

Your Will Be Done

Jesus in the Garden learned to pray for the Father's will to prevail in his life; that he felt

tension is clear in his prayer: *Not my will*, he says - that's a resignation - *but your will be done*. That's trusting obedience to a loving God - a Father who is being allowed his rightful place in the life of his Son.

Last Words

My Uncle Paul was a deeply obedient man. He obeyed his superiors in the army and the Police force; but these obeyings were part of a far deeper deference in him, like the way he obeyed his parents, his wife, and his family and friends; he was always at the strictest readiness for the needs of others. From the earliest memory I have of him, he was jumping up to get on with things; you only had to mention a need and he was planning some strategy to solve the problem, *irrespective of the cost to himself*. Objections and difficulties weren't to be given the same value as getting the thing done. As Peter pointed out at the funeral, this was not a cast of mind or a natural predisposition. It was a living out of the faith. With that he incorporated an extraordinary devotion to the Eucharist which took him to Mass every day; those who do this are never unchanged. They are taking on, shouldering the faith, and they will always grow like the one with whom they are fed. Monica has asked me to pass on her heartfelt thanks to all who have shared in her grief, and I add my own thanks and those of all the family. The consolation of your prayers and sympathy has been very great and deeply appreciated. By the way, the words at the top of the page were the last words Paul said, as he remembered some crowbar that he'd stored up for just this moment, and leapt up from under someone else's immovable furniture to fetch it, and went to the Father instead. We aren't allowed to judge: but *Well done, good and faithful servant!* Fr Philip