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**“To love means to
renew our
dedication every
day, with loving
deeds of service”**

"These days", you were saying,
"have been the happiest in my
life." And I answered you
without hesitation: that is
because you have lived with a
little more self-giving than
usual. (Furrow, 7)

24 March

Remember the parable of the talents. The servant who received one talent could have put it to good use, as his fellow servants did. He could have set to work with his own abilities. He could have made sure that his talent bore fruit. Instead, what is on his mind? He is worried about losing his talent. Fair enough. But, then? He goes and buries it! [1] The talent he received bears no fruit.

Let us not forget this man's sickly fear of putting to honest use his capacity for work, his mind, his will, *his whole being*. 'I'll bury it,' the poor fellow seems to be saying, 'but my freedom is safe!' Not so. He has turned his freedom towards something very definite, towards the most miserable and arid barrenness. He has taken sides, because he had no alternative. He had to choose, but he has chosen badly.

It is utterly false to oppose freedom and self-surrender, because self-surrender is a consequence of freedom. Look, when a mother sacrifices herself for love of her children, she has made a choice, and the more she loves the greater will be her freedom. If her love is great, her freedom will bear much fruit. Her children's good derives from her blessed freedom, which presupposes self-surrender, and from her blessed self-surrender, which is precisely freedom.

But, you might say, when we have attained our heart's desire, our search will be over. Does freedom vanish then? I assure you that it will then be more active than ever, because love is not content with a routine fulfilment of duty. Love is incompatible with boredom or apathy. To love means to renew our dedication every day, with loving deeds of service.

I insist, and I would like to engrave this deep in your hearts, that freedom and self-surrender are not contradictory. They sustain one another. Freedom can only be given up for love; I cannot conceive any other reason for surrendering it. And I am not just playing with words or phrases. When people give themselves freely, at every moment of their self-surrender, freedom renews their love; to be renewed in that way is to be always young, generous, capable of high ideals and great sacrifices. (Friends of God, 30-31)

[1] cf Matt 25:18