

### INVITATION BY GOD INTO TRUE FREEDOM

Each of us are invited by God into true freedom.

We might be tempted to abuse this freedom by selfish self-indulgence.

### DEBATE ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Earlier this month there has been further debate on the use of social media.

### AS A COMMUNITY

We benefit as a community from the positive aspects of media and social media.

We suffer as a community from the negative aspects of media and social media.

### AS CHRISTIANS | WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE?

In the light of today's Biblical Readings from Galatians and Luke, let us ponder as Christians what our response to defamatory and revengeful use of social media might be.

### ST. PAUL TO THE GALATIANS 5:1, 13-18

In today's Second reading of St Paul to the Galatian people, we proclaim and affirm Christ has set us free.

St Paul says:

*'For freedom Christ has set us free.*

*Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.'*

This freedom must not be abused:

*'For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters;*

*only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another.'*

In fact, love is the core, the very essence of our freedom.

*'For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment,*

*'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'*

We benefit as a community from the positive aspects of media and social media.

We suffer as a community from the negative aspects of media and social media.

In recent years there have been court cases in Australia

about a particular aspect of respecting our neighbour –

namely that we not be defamatory of others in social media.

Such defamatory behavior can severely wound the whole community.

Galatians continues:

*'If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.'*

Already in the 2015 South Australian Court ruling, and upheld upon appeal in 2017, we see in use of a search engine that defamatory material needs to be deleted after becoming aware of it.

And recently in the 2019 court ruling in New South Wales was the obligation to filter defamatory material before it is posted.

**WHAT DESIGNS CAN BE USED TO FILTER DEFAMATORY INSULTS AND VENGEANCE?**

How we treat each other in social media is a current debate in Australia.

As Christians, following the instruction of Paul in Galatians, we are not to consume each other, not to consume the community, with biting and devouring each other.

In the modern world, this includes all levels of media.

**LET US PRAY FOR THE GRACE**

Let us pray for the grace to overcome temptations to cyberbullying.

Let us pray for the grace to overcome selfish self-indulgence.

Let us pray for the grace to rejoice in the positive aspects of social media.

Let us pray for the grace to respect each other.

**GOSPEL OF LUKE 9:51-62**

In today's Gospel passage, we see the context of the passage.

**A MAJOR TURNING POINT**

This is a major turning point.

Jesus turned toward Jerusalem and began his journey to his suffering, death and resurrection, his journey to saving us, to redeeming us.

On this journey to life there is no room for revenge.

James and John called for violent revenge.

Jesus rebuked both of them.

For Christians today,

we cannot in conscience use social media for revenge.

The Gospel tells us:

*'When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.*

*And he sent messengers ahead of him.*

*On their way they entered a village  
of the Samaritans to make ready for him;  
but they did not receive him,  
because his face was set towards Jerusalem.*

*When his disciples James and John saw it,  
they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire  
to come down from heaven and consume them?'  
But he turned and rebuked them.  
Then they went on to another village.*

Jesus suffered and died once on the cross for us.  
There was an urgency for those Jesus invited to follow him on the road to Jerusalem.  
The gospel passage concluded with decisions to follow or not to follow Jesus immediately.

Let us continue the current debate in Australia  
about the positive and negative aspects of social media.

Let us appreciate the urgency of this debate,  
as we proclaim the Good News of Jesus.

An instance of people binding together to challenge cyberbullying overseas is in an article:  
[Vatican launches an international observatory on cyberbullying](#)

Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/063019.cfm>]

**THE CURRENT DEBATE ON DEFAMATORY USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Let us pray for the grace to overcome temptations to cyberbullying.  
Let us pray for the grace to overcome selfish self-indulgence.  
Let us pray for the grace to rejoice in the positive aspects of social media.  
Let us pray for the grace to respect each other.



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