

HOMILY

In today first reading, the 'book of Sirach' says, "If you choose you can keep the commandments, they will save you; if you trust in God, you too shall live; he has set before you fire and water."

Before the Gospel and the whole Bible was written, the very first Christian document to have existed was "The Dedache." This document is also called, "The teaching of the Apostles." The Dedache contained the two ways. That is, "The way of life and the way of death."

The early Christians ordered their lives around the norms of these two ways. This code of conduct helped the early Christians to do two important things in their lives; to treat God well and to treat others well.

The Dedache gave freedom for one to choose between the way of life and the way of death. This is the same way the book of Sirach is telling us today, "If you choose you can keep the commandments and they will save you, if you trust in God, you shall live."

With this freedom in mind, the Church under St. Augustine developed the doctrine of free-will. God is so free that he always shares with us that same freedom. He loves us so much that he can't force us to love him or to trust him.

This free-will given to us by God is for making us freely to do the good without fear or being coerced by God. The good is God himself. Thus, St. Francis De Sales says, "Our God is a God of the human heart." God moves the hearts of every man and woman on earth to love the good and to do the good. This is how God moves our human hearts and he makes us freely to "choose life instead of death."

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