

Matthew 5:17-37 (shortened version)

‘For I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven. ‘You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court...

‘You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

‘Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all... All you need say is “Yes” if you mean yes, “No” if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.’

In the Gospel today, Jesus continues with the “*Sermon on the Mount*” and tells the crowd that he has not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but that he has come to complete them! The law of Jesus is unlike any man-made law; it contains the hidden wisdom of God. It is a law given by love, and can only be fulfilled by genuine love and true concern for others. We hear Jesus teaching the people by saying, “You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors.....” but then he follows it with, “But I say this to you.....” Jesus is seeking to move us from simple obedience to the law, upwards to a higher level of spiritual awareness.

Let us open ourselves this week to receiving the law of Jesus into our hearts, let’s allow him to transform us so that we too can be “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” and “be perfect just as our heavenly Father is perfect.”

Prayer After Communion

Having fed upon these heavenly delights we pray, O Lord, so that we may always long for that food by which we truly live.

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time **12th February 2023**

Jesus, Wisdom of God, Law of the Christian



The theme running through today’s readings is wisdom. Not wisdom in an earthly sense but wisdom that comes from Jesus by following his law and his commandments as he continues his teachings with the Sermon on the Mount.

~ ~ ~

This is why we must ask the Lord to gift us the Holy Spirit and the gift of wisdom that teaches us to see with God's eyes, to feel with God's heart to speak with God's words.

Pope Francis

Opening Prayer

O God, who teach us that you abide in hearts that are just and true, grant that we may be so fashioned by your grace as to become a dwelling pleasing to you.

Ecclesiasticus 15:16-21

If you wish, you can keep the commandments, to behave faithfully is within your power. He has set fire and water before you; put out your hand to whichever you prefer. Man has life and death before him; whichever a man likes better will be given him. For vast is the wisdom of the Lord; he is almighty and all-seeing. His eyes are on those who fear him, he notes every action of man. He never commanded anyone to be godless, he has given no one permission to sin.

The first reading from Ecclesiasticus was written by an experienced scribe in Jerusalem around 200 B.C. called Ben Sirā. In today's passage he sets out the contrasting choices which face us, to which we can freely reach out our hands. It is one of the chief passages in the Bible stressing our own free will. It's up to us whether we choose good or ill, right or wrong. God calls for our love and response, but does not force us, for love must be a free act on our part.

Psalms 118(119):1-2,4-5,17-18,33-34

*They are happy whose life is blameless, who follow God's law!
They are happy who do his will, seeking him with all their hearts.*

*You have laid down your precepts to be obeyed with care.
May my footsteps be firm to obey your statutes.*

*Bless your servant and I shall live and obey your word.
Open my eyes that I may see the wonders of your law.*

*Teach me the demands of your statutes and I will keep them to the end.
Train me to observe your law, to keep it with my heart.*

1 Corinthians 2:6-10

We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.

These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

At the time of Paul's writing, some Christians believed they possessed a "wisdom" that made them "mature" or "perfect" and gave them the right to look down on others as "children". He is reminding the readers that we have received a wisdom that has come from God himself and is far beyond human understanding. This wisdom is revealed to us through the Holy Spirit who lives in us and informs us as Christians.

***Alleluia, alleluia! Speak, Lord, your servant is listening:
you have the message of eternal life. Alleluia!***

Offertory Prayer

May this oblation, O Lord, we pray, cleanse and renew us and may it become for those who do your will the source of eternal reward.