

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time – 09-07-2025

“Who can know God’s counsel, or who can conceive what the Lord intends...scarce do we guess the things on earth, and what is within our grasp we find with difficulty; but when things are in heaven, who can search them out?”

God’s ways can seem very mysterious. Many people look around at the beauty of creation and readily admit that there must be a God but then at the same time they want to live as if he didn’t exist.

But if there is a God who created all this then there must be very clear guidelines to help us navigate the world around us.

I can’t imagine that God would have created light to show forth his beauty and then just allow us to drift aimlessly in darkness?

It’s quite ironic! The stars and planets chart a pretty definite course, weather patterns on earth seem to follow a moderately predictable track, animals behave quite routinely according to their nature and the list goes on and on.

And yet human beings so often choose to step outside of God’s plan and set their own course thinking that they know better.

Obviously the Lord, the Creator of the universe, understands the world around us perfectly and is aware of the challenges it presents much better than we do so he gave us rules to live by.

Interestingly, social scientists have observed that when a school is surrounded by a fence the children tend to wander the entire campus with greater freedom because of the security that the fence affords but if there is no fence then they behave more timidly and remain huddled, closer to the school building.

God's laws are like our security fence. If we do our best to stay within the fence, we will enjoy greater liberty and, at the same time, have greater confidence in our eternal salvation.

But if we decide to stray outside of the fenced-in area, to jump the fence, so to say, then who knows what dangers we will encounter.

The theological and moral teachings of the Catholic Church, every single one of them, give us a clear and safe area to wander freely within. However, some might ask, what gives the Catholic Church the ability to know the mind of God and the right to tell us what to do?

The answer to that question lies also in the first reading, "...Who ever knew your counsel, except you had given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high? And thus were the paths of those on earth made straight."

Jesus is the Incarnate Wisdom of God the Father who came to show us the way. Furthermore, he sent his Holy Spirit to inform

his Holy Catholic Church so that she could inform her children how to keep their paths straight on earth – their path to heaven.

However, since we have been endowed with freewill, a great responsibility belongs to us to allow the grace of God to penetrate our hearts through his Holy Catholic Church. This can be hard.

In the gospel today Jesus said, “If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”

This is pretty harsh and was probably rather enigmatic to his fellow Hebrews. Who does this guy think he is? God?

Yeah! Jesus was exaggerating to make that very point. He is God and we would do well to listen to him.

Following Jesus and his Holy Catholic Church means putting him and his teachings before everything and everyone else in our lives including our closest friends, our family and even our very self, which can be very difficult and quite painful.

It really all comes down to carrying our cross and helping others to do the same so that we can be Jesus’ disciples in this life and be with him for all eternity in the next.

Who can know God’s counsel, or who can even conceive what the Lord intends? Everyone of us, provided we are willing to follow the counsel of Holy Mother Church!