

23RD SUNDAY ORD. (C)

GIVE ME WISDOM TO HELP ME TO PLAN MY LIFE

September 3/4, 2022

When Solomon succeeded his father David as king, the gift he prayed for was wisdom, so that he would be able to rule well. Part of the prayer reads: “O God of my fathers and Lord of mercy...with you is Wisdom, who knows your works, and was present when you made the world, and who understands what is pleasing in your sight and what is right according to your commandments. Send her forth from the holy heavens, so that she may be with me and toil, and that I may learn what is pleasing to you...and she will guide me wisely in my actions and guard me with her glory” (Wis.9:1-6,9-11).

From the first reading, Wisdom tells us that nobody can know God’s intentions and plans. This is because our human nature corrupts everything we plan and do. We are not able to understand what happens around us. To know God’s mind and understand His ways, we need wisdom and the Holy Spirit. In order to receive the Spirit to guide us, there is the need for self -denial and commitment to the Lord. This is what Jesus is telling us today. From the past two weeks, He has made it clear that salvation is not an easy task. One has to enter by the narrow gate (Lk.13:22ff), and taking lower seats at functions and inviting the poor and the needy who cannot pay back. Today, one has to ‘hate’ himself, family and possessions. In the eyes of the world, this is unthinkable. But this is the key to heaven.

We plan our daily activities because we want to achieve success and meet our goal. We consult experts and those who are experienced in the field. Jesus gives some examples of what people do before embarking on certain projects or settling disputes. What about my spiritual life? How do I plan to defeat the evil one

who fights against me every day, and the building of the kingdom here on earth in order to attain the heavenly one?

I have to know how to use the things in the world wisely and according to the desire of God. All obstacles in my spiritual life should be done away with, including relatives and friends. I should have the desire to change from my old way of life to a new one. St. John told the believers: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world – the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches – comes not from the Father but from the world. And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God lives forever" (1Jn.2:15-17).

The second reading is also teaching us how to be committed Christians; it is to repent and change and do away with our old selves. It is also to forgive and to show compassion. Onesimus was Philemon's slave who stole from him and then ran away. But when he met Paul, he was converted. He, Paul decided to send him back to his master, and he advised Philemon to accept him as a new person, a brother, and not as a slave.

Like Onesimus, we too have been set free by Christ, so we have to live our lives guided by the Spirit and the wisdom of God. We are not to be slaves to earthly things anymore. It is time we put the wishes and desires of God over and above our own, if we want salvation.

I cannot live my spiritual life without putting things in place to guide me. I should know what to do every day and throughout the week. I should know the things which will bring me God's grace and, what will lead me to fall into the trap of the evil one. How do I assess my spiritual life? Am I afraid of earthly shame and want to avoid it all the time; what about everlasting shame? What am I doing to avoid that one too?